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The Nation. November 15, 1980 $1

EDITORIAL

AMERICA'S FORGOTTEN MAJORITY

It was fitting that President Carter decided to concede the election on the basis of "exit polls," which predicted his defeat before the voting was over in California. After all, he ran his campaign and much of his Administration with one eye on the polls and the other on his pollster, Patrick Caddell.

As a matter of fact, even before his concession speech on television at about 10 Tuesday evening (the earliest on record; NBC had projected the Reagan landslide at 8:15), the listening audience was told that Caddell had given his chief the bad news on the day before the election.

One wonders if the President entertained the idea of conceding even before the polls opened. In addition to all the money such a gesture would have saved, it might also have rescued a few of the more worthy Democrats whom the President brought down with him.

But our theory is that the President and the commentators are both looking at the wrong set of numbers when they interpret the election as a mandate for the radical right. The real story may well be that voter turnout reached a new low in 1980, and that 52 percent of the eligible voters were so alienated from the two major-party candidates that they either did not vote at all or voted for one of the third-party candidates. The Reagan "landslide" thus was a grand total of merely 26 percent of the electorate.

What this statistic tells us is that there is a disaffected majority out there whom neither Reagan's *recherche du temps perdu* nor the shattered coalition politics of the Democrats has reached. This is the new constituency. The real question is whether the best way to speak to it is within or outside the two-party system.

DEFENSE AND 'THE TIMES'
Alan Wolfe

CANCER FALLOUT
John W. Gofman, M.D.

JONESTOWN NATION
Penny Lernoux

APPOINTMENT IN SOMALIA?
Fred Halliday

CLASSIC BASEBALL
Wilfrid Sheed

FILMS OF EAST EUROPE
Morris Dickstein

THIRD WORLD PESTICIDES

THE CIRCLE OF POISON

DAVID WEIR & MARK SCHAPIRO

The export of banned pesticides from the industrial countries to the Third World has become a scandal of global proportions. Massive advertising campaigns by multinational pesticide corporations—Dow, Shell, Chevron—have turned the Third World not only into a booming growth market for pesticides but also a dumping ground. Dozens of pesticides too dangerous for unrestricted use in the United States are shipped to underdeveloped countries. There, lack of regulation, illiteracy and repressive working conditions can turn even a "safe" pesticide into a deadly weapon.

According to the World Health Organization, someone in the underdeveloped countries is poisoned by pesticides *every minute*.

But we in the industrialized countries are the victims too. Pesticide exports create a circle of poison, disabling workers in American chemical plants and later returning to us in the food we import. Drinking a morning cup of coffee or enjoying a luncheon salad, the American consumer may be eating pesticides banned or restricted in the United States, but legally shipped to the Third World. The United States is among the world's top food importers and at least 10 percent of our imported food is officially estimated to be contaminated. Although the Food and Drug Administration is supposed to protect us from such hazards, during one fifteen-month period, the General Accounting Office discovered, *half* of all the imported food identified by the F.D.A. as pesticide-contaminated was marketed without any warning to consumers or penalty to importers.

At least 25 percent of U.S. pesticide exports are products that are banned, heavily restricted,

(Continued on Page 514)

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LETTERS.

REDGRAVE'S POLITICS

Encino, Calif.
I found your "Death of a Principle" editorial [*The Nation,* Oct. 11] a celebration of fatuity over feeling. It was gross in its analogizing *Death of a Princess*, and its offense against the sensibilities of Mobil Oil, with *Playing for Time* and the tragic hurt Jews felt at seeing Vanessa Redgrave playing the lead. . . .

The Arab hatred of Israel has by now come to mean a genocidal campaign. Redgrave's compatriots in the Palestine Liberation Organization have proudly boasted the slaughter of innocent women and children in Israel. . . .

How unfeeling of *The Nation* to turn away from Jewish pain. The lesson of the Holocaust, so recent in history, has in so short a time fallen only to the Jews to remember and to protest its ugliness. Redgrave was an unmistakable reminder. *Charles Ansell, Ed. D.*

South Burlington, Vt.
Rather than complain about the choice of Vanessa Redgrave to star in *Playing For Time*, Jews should have welcomed the opportunity it presented to change her mind.

As a conscientious and competent actress, it is unlikely that Redgrave could adequately prepare for and complete such a role without gaining a far better understanding of those portions of the Jewish experience which make the P.L.O. unacceptable.

Constance L. Kite

Brooklyn, N.Y.
As a longtime reader of *The Nation* I was shocked by the utter nonsense of your editorial "Death of a Principle."

Jews are not trying to prevent Vanessa Redgrave from practicing her profession despite the fact that she is a dedicated supporter of the P.L.O. However, as far as I know, she has never denounced the long list of murders of noncombatant men, women and children by the P.L.O., whose oft-stated aim is the extermination of Israel—"Drive them into the sea"—another Holocaust!

That, in the opinion of Jews, is reason enough to object to her role representing a survivor of Auschwitz.

It is beyond my understanding that, these being the facts, *The Nation* can claim that a "principle is lost."

Ernest Deutch

NOW HEAR THIS!

The Nation on radio. Interviews with *Nation* authors on the Jeff Siegel show.

Time: 8 A.M. Sundays.
Place: WKHK—106 FM in New York City.

REPLY

The last thing we would suggest is that citizens don't have the right to comment on, protest, or otherwise deplore the casting of Vanessa Redgrave, or anyone else, on a television play. The first thing we will continually reaffirm, however, is our opposition to those who would blacklist an actress from a role or roles because they disapprove of her politics, opinions, public statements, or lack of them. The fact that the oil companies are now the chief underwriters for much of the serious fare that is shown on television underscores the importance of insulating the content and casting of programs from economic and corporate bullying. Just as *Death of a Princess* should be shown, despite Mobil's obviously disingenuous protests about its content, so *Playing for Time* cum Vanessa Redgrave should be shown despite the sincere protests of those who criticize her views on the P.L.O. *—The Editors*

CORPORATE DEMOCRACY

Saginaw, Mich.
I hope that many more *Nation* readers were upset to read in Robert Sherrill's apt and informative review of the *CDE Stock Ownership Directory: Energy* [*The Nation*, Oct. 25] that nothing can be expected to come from revelation of interlocking ownership and directorship between a few huge financial institutions and the oil companies. Readers attracted to the *Nation*'s searching and impassioned view of public affairs should recognize a duty to use that information to effect change. . . .

House Resolution 7010 (referred jointly to the Committees on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, the Judiciary, and Education and Labor), entitled the "Corporate Democracy Act of 1980," is written to turn the tables in favor of consumers and workers. It may not receive serious consideration for a few years, but in spite of the half-million millionaires in this country, there are more of us who neither consume several times what most people earn nor get paid for manipulating the efforts, property and selfishness of others. Despite legal constructs, large corporations are no more than paper concepts realized in a distribution of particular human personalities and ambitions, created by leave of popular authority. H.R. 7010 seeks to make whole that authority to protect its more numerous constituents. Corporations with more than $250 million in assets or sales, or 5,000 employees, would be required to report under and comply with the act, whose provisions restrict interlocking directorates, define and require a majority of "independent directors" and committees with specific public duties and mandate disclosures of financial interest. The bill creates restrictions on and remedies for changes of plant location, provides assistance for cooperative associations of employees and imposes the requirement of just cause for adverse action against an employee with protection of workers' constitutional, civil and legal rights while providing criminal penalties for directors, officers and managers.

The passage of such legislation is a primary and essential objective for those working for economic and social justice in the 1980s. The first steps within the power of every citizen are obtaining a copy of H.R. 7010, asking about Representatives' and Senators' stands and informing them of one's support. *Andrew Tierman*

REAGAN'S 'FREEDOM'

Stanford, Calif.
Michael Chinoy's account ["Chun 'Purifies' South Korea," *The Nation*, Oct. 25] of the Chun Doo Hwan regime in South Korea described in detail that Government's ruthless effort to stamp out all political opposition. May I add a chilling footnote: In a campaign speech on October 19 Ronald Reagan referred to "the freedom and prosperity of free market countries like Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore." Neither the press nor the opposing candidates challenged Reagan's strange perception of "freedom." *Rachelle Marshall*

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EDITORIALS.

Reagan Country?

It would be a mistake to think that this country has signaled by its choice of Ronald Reagan and his ideological allies that it wants to shake a fist in the face of the world while giving free rein to private enterprise. Instead, what we got in the Republican sweep was a bitter repudiation of things as they are. That meant Jimmy Carter as symbol and two generations of increasingly timid and unimaginative Democratic behavior in Congress.

For the left, the debacle of November 4 is at least a great opportunity. Everything remains to be done and the work of reconstruction must start now. The profound shock to the Democratic establishment comes not from the defeat of Carter, who had adopted so much of the agenda called "conservative," but from the elimination of most of the remnants of the New Deal coalition in Congress.

The question is what effect that shock will have on those aspects of our politics that could be called hopeful. There will be some who look on the results as confirmation of the "conservative" mood of the country and therefore as a signpost toward an increasingly feckless set of policies for the Democrats. If the Democrats go the route of getting "the government off our backs," in Reagan's simple-minded formulation, then they deserve the oblivion toward which they seem to be stumbling.

If President Reagan (to use that odd-sounding appellation for the first time) really does hew to his campaign line and unleashes the corporate world and its alleged "creative energies," the Democrats should have a fairly easy time of it. That fantasy would soon go up in smoke, as all the smarter characters in the business world have known all along even as they watched the old actor charm the folks with his simple line. What his hard-boiled backers really want is a sort of corporate statism in the saddle riding hell for leather. That, of course, means a new load on the American back—the business system and the government it will now more openly dominate.

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But the Democrats cannot take the easy way out of the American political dilemma and just wait for Reaganism to collapse (as Thatcherism is doing in Britain). If they are to survive as a party that can govern, they must start from ground zero and completely restructure their ideas and their organization. In that process the memory of the Carter interregnum will rapidly fade.

Is it reasonable to expect that some of the ousted Democrats like McGovern, Brademas, Bayh, Church and Nelson will produce the fresh approaches that are needed and then energetically impose them on their party? Probably not, without a great infusion of people and ideas that cannot be called traditional. The prime question for such innovative types is whether the Democratic Party is a vehicle which, after a major overhaul, can still be made to run—not just to win elections but to govern decently in the common interest.

And so these potential shock troops of a more hopeful future will be looking beyond the Democrats for inspiration and recruits. They will not pause long over the remains of the Anderson effort; that attempt at mainstream mugwumpery is already showing its thin threads. They should scrutinize more closely the content of the Citizens Party of Barry Commoner and company and linger over the various proposals of the democratic socialists. They must keep in mind the need for broad popular appeal without vulgarizing a program for what must be done in a society which once openly declared its aim to be a "welfare state."

And they should be thoroughly aware of the certainty that the genial figure in the White House will preside, so to speak, over an Administration whose vaguely monetarist domestic policies combine with hard-line foreign policies to require a substantial degree of repression of the inevitable dissent. We shall be hearing much more about "law and order."

Polarization is much more the order of the day under Reaganism than homogenization. Reagan himself has never openly embraced the notion that he represented the middle class against the rest of the people, as some did who ran on his ticket, but that was the unmistakable message and it is an ugly one. It assumes a permanent underclass at the disposal of its masters, lacking any hope of upward mobility. Public squalor is accepted as the price of private affluence for a segment of the population. Revolutionary explosion lurks in that mixture, along with brutal means to suppress it.

These are some of the dangers resulting from the 1980 elections, leaving aside the prospect of foreign adventures and the consequences of a policy of military "superiority" over the U.S.S.R. It is up to the liberal left to organize to counter these perils and then to replace the apparatus that will take over in just two months.

There is no denying that the costs of this election will be paid by working people of this country, the poor underclass, women and minorities—the traditional liberal constituency. But we are not discouraged by the defeat of neoliberals such as Jimmy Carter. *They* are the problem, not the ideological challenge posed by a Ronald Reagan. It is cold-war liberalism that was rejected by the voters last week. Why should anyone be surprised that when given a choice between the vacillating, unprincipled performance of those professional liberals who constantly sell out to the right in order to preserve a mythical "vital center," the voters decide to opt for the real thing?

The Hollow Man

In the dark night of its soul, America felt sorry for itself. Unloved in the world, pushed around by glowering, unkempt ayatollahs, watching the Soviet Union wax strong and threatening, beset by seemingly uncontrollable inflation at home, their standard of living eroding, convinced that Washington was the root of all evils, a large number of voters turned to the reassuring, folksy strength of Ronald Reagan. While the aw-shucks Reagan ran a shrewd and clever campaign designed to convince voters they need not fear him, he implied that they must fear the world. Reagan, who liked to quote Franklin Roosevelt's 1932 campaign pledge to balance the budget, might also have rephrased his inaugural speech: "The only thing we have is fear itself."

Reagan's campaign sounded political tocsins from the past beyond F.D.R.'s budget-balancing pledge. There were echoes of John Kennedy's promise to "get America moving again" in Reagan's vow to put the nation back to work (paradoxically, the laissez-faire conservative was perceived as the activist), as well as hints of the twinkling unclehood of Ike. No matter that Reagan's chief and only public economic prescription for achieving recovery was the Kemp-Roth plan—which he had gradually abandoned. Etched in our memory will be the victorious Alfonse D'Amato, who is perhaps (if you will excuse a little New York chauvinism) the most dismal of the new class of freshman Senators, elucidating on election night the Reagan vision: "inculcating a desire to do for yourself and unshackling initiative and, uh, people don't want some big guy telling them how to run their business." It was as clear a statement of the Reagan program as we have heard. Oh yes, he does advocate tax holidays for businesses that relocate in ghetto areas. This, coupled with his "two-tier" minimum wage, would put blacks and other minorities back to work, his brain trust promises. That is Reagan's Third World policy in a nutshell: a tax giveaway to business coupled with a cheap and grateful labor force in heavily policed ghettos.

Inflation, the analysts said, was the $64,000 issue with the voters; yet before the election *Time* was reporting that Reagan had been "unable to convince a large number of voters that his approach would be much more successful than Carter's." True, the Reagan mantra that "Government causes inflation and government can end it" probably had a superficial appeal—but it tapped visceral anti-Washington sentiments more than it did the voters' belief that balancing the budget and eliminating "fraud and waste" were the cures for inflation.

But again, the voters cared little about Reagan's pro-

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grams. In foreign affairs he was perceived fuzzily as a strong, consistent leader who would somehow stand up to the Russians and prevent the Irans of this world from ever humiliating the United States again. This adds up more to a reflexive neo-isolationism—"make the world go away," as Eddy Arnold used to sing—than a vote for any sort of foreign policy. The eleventh-hour revival of the "hostage drama"—our national Passion play—stirred dormant emotions of self-pity ("Let our people go") and truculence ("Nuke the Ayatollah"). A majority of voters would prefer a SALT II treaty, though Reagan was against it. A majority would also prefer stronger defenses, but could one deduce from that—as the fundamentalists so easily deduce it from Scripture—that Americans want an accelerated buildup of the MX, a B-1 bomber, a neutron bomb and an arms race with Russia? Indeed, the pollsters—if they can be believed—found considerable disparities between what a majority of Americans support and what Ronald Reagan said he would do. On E.R.A., Social Security, national health insurance, most Americans favor what Reagan opposes.

Perhaps the pollsters who found that a majority believed that Reagan was the candidate most likely to "make America feel good about itself again" put their finger on the only truly positive emotion behind the large vote for Reagan. Reagan stands for a simpler bygone America redolent of small-town virtues, solid family ties, free from troublesome feminists and gay activists, the family Bible on the TV set, Jerry Falwell on the screen. This year the Moral Majority replaced Nixon's silent majority of 1972. Neither really exist, of course, but a politician must sound themes that make people feel good about themselves.

Now, for a time, America can feel good about itself again. Reagan is the man from the land of the happy ending. Prosperity is, after all, just around the corner; the Russians will shrink to human size; the birds will sing and the children play without fear in our streets and on the grounds of American embassies all over the world; the avatar of the American dream has descended in the personhood of Ronald Reagan, whose sound remedy for unemployment is "get a job"—as he did when he became a sports announcer and the golden portals of Hollywood opened up to him. America will be the shining "city upon a hill," Reagan's crib from a sermon by John Winthrop in 1630 on board the ship *Arbella* bound for the New World.

At the close of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway stands and contemplates Long Island, "a fresh, green breast of the new world," through the eyes of the first Dutch sailors, the last time a vision was provided "commensurate to man's capacity to wonder." Then he thinks of Gatsby, who believed in the green light and was "borne back ceaselessly into the past." In *The Crack-Up* Fitzgerald also wrote: "It is sadder to find the past again and find it inadequate to the present than it is to have it elude you and remain forever a harmonious conception of memory." America has found its past again; the sadness will come.

RICHARD LINGEMAN

Richard Lingeman is executive editor of The Nation.

Direct Line

A wave of obscurantism is sweeping the Western world as well as the Middle East, and it has its opponents on a very ill-advised defensive. Even the most inbred optimists among us are aware that human thought does not progress along a straight line and that our history at best may be described as two steps forward and one and a half steps back. Two hundred and twenty-odd years ago Voltaire lit a lamp in the gloom spread by Europe's vindictive and deadly political churches with the battle cry, "*Ecrasez l'infame!*" Our great-grandfathers reflected on this with a smile, imagining that here was a battle definitely won. By now we know it was not. Religion and politics are once again mingled in a volatile brew.

In the past months we heard Mr. Reagan announce to widespread approval that the Old Testament may after all be the best authority for the school system on the creation of the universe. Mr. Carter and a host of other politicians assured us they are directly led by Jesus. Mr. Begin's West Bank policies have been dictated by God, as has Mr. Khomeini's revolution. The Pope reaffirms to his bishops in Latin that eternal doom awaits remarried men or women who make love to their partners. We seem to have entered into a new Middle Age, made more sinister—in Churchill's phrase—by the light of perverted science, and it is time that humanists wipe the respectful smile off their faces when organized religion is discussed, a smile that stems from the early 1900s, when mutual respect appeared to be the voice of the future and intolerance and fanaticism the voices of the past. There is nothing respectable in the minds of men who imagine the Creator as their personal superlobbyist and policeman.

The United States has its separation of church and state, promulgated by men from a more Christian and more enlightened era. Because of it, I would strongly be in favor of the immediate impeachment of any President or Congressman claiming divine guidance. Yet the basic, principled objection to the church politic lies elsewhere. It lies in the simple fact that the nation, its governance, its laws and institutions are all general, public and mundane matters, to be decided (ideally) by common consent and for the common good—as it can be ascertained by the data of political and economic science. Beliefs, on the other hand, whether in the interest Jesus has in the American leadership or Mohammed in the Iranian leadership, are purely private matters. If not Matthew 5:22, then history should admonish those who hold them to humility: there are no events on record where the orthodox acted more humanely or nobly than the unorthodox, where the believers were more gentle than the agnostics or atheists. Beliefs may give comfort to those who hold them, but they have no brief to give discomfort to those who do not. They have been private matters since the last public burning of a heretic, which is not so very long ago. We want to keep them private.

HANS KONING

Hans Koning is the New York novelist.

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ITEM. ITEM. ITEM.

■ **Lost in all the election post-mortems was a small but modestly heartening bit of news. That is the relative success the "minor" parties had, given all the blockades thrown in their path by the two-party establishment, in simply getting their names on the ballot. These difficulties were detailed by Richard J. Walton in a recent issue (see "The Two-Party Monopoly," August 30-September 6).**

John Anderson was most successful in getting on the ballot, Walton tells us, appearing in all fifty states. Also batting 1.000 was the well-heeled Libertarian Party, Ed Clark for President. (In their first Presidential stab, back in 1972, the Libertarians made it in only two states.)

Barry Commoner's Citizens Party qualified in thirty-nine states. This total, the party claims, is the largest ever achieved by a minority party on its first try. (The big disappointment was Commoner's failure to qualify in such important states as Massachusetts, Texas and Florida.) Furthermore, in keeping with its conservation ethic (and exiguous campaign chest), the Citizens Party spent less than $150,000 on its efforts. The bad news is that even that modest $150,000 exhausted the party's funds.

Herewith a rundown on some of the other alternative parties: Socialist Workers (Andrew Pulley for President), twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia; Communist Party (Gus Hall), twenty-four states and D.C. (in 1976, the C.P. was on the ballot in only nineteen states and in 1972, thirteen); Socialist Party (David McReynolds), ten states (seven in 1976). Clearly, the efforts of thousands of citizens who turned a deaf ear to the Carter-Reagan echolalia paid off in increased ballot representation for the third parties. Even though their 1980 vote totals were disappointing, they provide a foundation for the future.

■ Eight years ago in San Antonio, William J. (Scotty) Rummel was arrested on a charge of stealing $120.75 under false pretext and, after a very brief trial, convicted. Because this was his third felony conviction—the other two involved running up charges of $80 on someone else's credit card and a $28.36 check forgery—he was given a mandatory life sentence under a 123-year-old Texas statute. That law was upheld in a 5-to-4 decision this spring by the Supreme Court (see "Cruel, as Usual," *The Nation*, April 5).

Rummel's Supreme Court lawyer, Scott Atlas, didn't give up, though, and last month a Federal court threw out the conviction for theft on the ground that the court-appointed lawyer in the trial had performed so badly that Rummel's constitutional right to counsel had been violated. Unless that ruling is reversed on appeal or Texas chooses to try him again, both of which are doubtful, Rummel will be released. Rummel's story apparently has a happy ending, though seven years in a Texas prison for an unconstitutional conviction on a minor offense (it is now a misdemeanor in Texas) is a rough way to get there. But the Supreme Court's refusal to limit barbarously long sentences still stands, and the shoddy legal defense given many indigents will continue.

■ **In the tight little tyranny of Uruguay, police torture is as commonplace as a parking ticket (Amnesty International estimates that one in fifty Uruguayans has been subjected to torture). In an attempt to give human-rights violations a human face, as it were, as well as because of the urgency of the case itself, we relay to you a report on the plight of one Uruguayan, Francisco Laurenzo Pons, arrested in 1978, most probably tortured and, as a result, in failing health and facing a six-and-a-half-year prison term. Laurenzo, now 32, was the chief cartoonist for *Marcha*, perhaps the most influential political magazine in Latin America until it was shut down by the military junta in 1972. As a left-wing radical and Youth Leader of the Uruguayan Socialist Party, Laurenzo was, in 1976, denounced as a "militant Communist," but managed to escape imprisonment by going underground. He was apprehended in 1978 and sentenced to prison on grounds unknown, though possibly "subversive association." He has a serious kidney ailment (Amnesty International reports that kidney beatings are a common form of torture in Uruguay), and his wife in Uruguay fears his life would be endangered by further imprisonment. For more details on the case and how you can help, write Amnesty International Adoption Group 46, P.O. Box 6284, Santa Barbara, California 93111.**

■ Campus impresarios who handle the "talent" on the busy and lucrative college lecture circuit sometimes run into ego problems more usually found on Broadway. Consider Loyola College's dealings with that temperamental performer Henry Kissinger. Loyola, which is located in Baltimore, has long sought to emerge from Johns Hopkins's shadow, and so it set out to snare some big names for its podium, according to Zelma M. Holzgang in *The Messenger*, a neighborhood weekly. The likes of Barbara Walters and Gerald Ford were no great problem (although when Ford arrived with a contingent of sixteen-count-'em-sixteen Secret Service men, the tiny campus was turned upside down). Kissinger, however, was reluctant and demanded a two-page letter telling all about Loyola—its size, enrollment, goals and scholastic standing. There followed a period of diplomatic silence. Finally, Wayne Schelle of the college called Kissinger's secretary, who told him that Kissinger would like a "handwritten letter from two prominent Americans, urging him to speak at Loyola." Fortunately, Gen. Alexander Haig and Senator Charles Mathias were on Loyola's board. They duly wrote the letters, and, the ritual of the kowtow observed, Kissinger accepted. The day of the lecture, however, another contretemps developed: Kissinger's car broke down. The great man called the college and requested that a limousine pick him up in Georgetown. Schelle telephoned all over Baltimore, but was unable to locate a limousine. Then, seized by that divine afflatus of inspiration usually reserved for the Kissingers and Nixons of this world in times of crisis, he called a funeral home. A limousine was available, and Henry went out, as they say, in style.

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ARTICLES.

THE PENTAGON HANDOUT PAPERS

Defense Crisis At 'The Times'

ALAN WOLFE

In a recent seven-part series, over a single week, with each day devoted to a different danger (for example, Monday's child was an adverse strategic balance, Saturday's was a weak industrial base), *The New York Times* looked out on the world and was very unhappy indeed. The Russians, it seems, are armed and dangerous, having made advances in every modern method developed by men to kill other men. The condition of America's military machine, on the other hand, resembles New York's subway system—plagued by personnel shortages, worn-out parts, outmoded management strategies and fiscal stringency. The number of the articles (New York's deteriorating parks rated only three in another series), the column inches devoted to them, their spacing and the gravity of their tone were all meant to indicate that Something of Importance was happening in the world. Something was, but its source lay neither in Moscow nor in Washington. The important news was that *The Times* had decided to intervene in a long-running debate, and its intervention could be a crucial event in resolving it.

The debate, of course, involves the next round in the arms race. Beginning in the last year or so of the Ford Administration, when the Central Intelligence Agency's so-called Team B report discovered spectacular advances in Soviet military spending, a fear of American weakness has spread among segments of the defense community. From its initial base in the extreme right of the political spectrum, this concern spilled over to the center as the 1980 Presidential election drew near. When the SALT II treaty was put in limbo and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, talk of détente and arms control disappeared from the political agenda, and was replaced by disagreements over how much the defense budget should be increased. In the reheated political atmosphere, the United States announced a new nuclear strategy, resumed its support for binary nerve gas, sped up deployment of the MX missile, pushed forward the Rapid Deployment Force and sent AWACS to Saudi Arabia in response to the Iranian-Iraqi war. U.S. perceptions of Soviet intentions and capabilities had hardened but, strangely enough, there still was little certainty about the two questions that began it all: How strong is the Soviet Union? How weak is the United States?

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The articles in *The Times* attempt to answer those questions. Every effort was made to deal with the issues comprehensively: the best *Times*men were sent out, they talked to all the right people, data were collected, a few dissenters were interviewed and sober judgments were made. The results were impressive. A lead story, published on September 21, introduced the issues, identified the participants and gave some history. The next day was devoted to nuclear strategy, covering debates on ICBM vulnerability, sea-launched cruise missiles, the future of the Triad and anti-ballistic missile systems. Each of the next three days reviewed the status of one of the armed forces: Air Force, Army and Navy, in that order. The sixth article was concerned exclusively with the Rapid Deployment Force and whether it could intervene quickly if called upon. The final article posed questions about the capacity of America's defense industry to meet the needs of a military emergency.

All seven articles began on page 1, and in every case an entire page of news inside the paper carried forward the story. The first five articles, but not the last two, contained charts and diagrams, in which missile strength was represented by missiles, planes by planes and people by people. Every article began with a dramatic lead sentence, went on to state the views of leading Pentagon planners, allowed that different points of view existed and concluded with a statement, often bittersweet, from an acknowledged authority (one member of the Joint Chiefs, one "senior Pentagon aide," a brigade commander, an Admiral, the estimate of a General and "senior Pentagon officials").

The tone of the headlines was urgent and troubled: "Nation's Military Anxiety Grows as Russians Gain"; "Nuclear

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Gains by Russians Prompt a Reaction by U.S."; "Questions Raised on the Readiness of Army for a Protracted Conflict"; "Shortages and Inefficiencies Plague Industrial Base of the U.S. Military." Like popular mystery stories, each article followed the same basic plot, concluding that while the United States has its strengths, it is falling behind. (There was one exception, military affairs correspondent Drew Middleton's story on the Navy, which reluctantly concluded that despite "shortages of skilled personnel . . . a slippage in the delivery of new ships, submarines and aircraft . . . a shrinking inventory of weapons, ammunition and spare parts," our side was still ahead.)

The overall intent of the series apparently was to convince sober-minded, objective readers that serious problems of readiness existed in America's military forces and that responsible officials recognized these problems and were struggling against difficult if not impossible odds—like Russia's insistence on carrying out its own foreign policy, the apathy of the American public and the separation of powers—to do something about them.

The difficulties of being objective and factual are revealed in the second article in the series, in which Richard Burt is discussing the possibility that American nuclear components are wearing thin. Using the Titan 2 missile as an example, Burt writes, "The problems besetting the Titan 2 were vividly demonstrated in Damascus, Arkansas, last week when a fuel tank of one of the missiles, punctured by a falling socket wrench, exploded and sent a cloud of toxic chemicals into the air." It sounds so factual, down to the point of naming the kind of wrench. The truth of the matter is that Burt did not know what happened in Arkansas—only the Defense Department did. Burt chose to print what the department told him, not as assertion but as fact. Burt was publishing a truth, not the truth. His truth can be called Official Truth, which might be defined as the truth that all the official parties to a given controversy agree to be the case, regardless of whether it actually is or not.

Newspapers—Americans in general—pride themselves on facts. But the story that *The Times* set out to cover, by its very nature, lies in the realm of Official Truth and Official Facts. The issues involved are not like Abscam—did Congressman X take a bribe or did he not? Nor are they like the deterioration of New York City's parks—what historical forces brought this situation into being? In the twilight zone in which Official Facts replace real facts, *The Times*'s story took on an unreal aura. Like a book written about a trial by the defense attorney, *The Times* was attempting both to cover a controversy in the world and to justify the point of view of one side. For all the tone of objectivity, the charts and the quotes from Seymour Melman (or even Paul Nitze—balance, after all, must be maintained), the feeling one had on concluding the seven days of doomsaying was that *The Times* had chosen to print the longest Pentagon handout in history.

One could respond to these articles by challenging the facts, but that, I think, would be a serious mistake, something like conducting a wrestling match during an earthquake, for there would be no firm ground under either of the contestants. It makes more sense, in my view, to comment on *The Times*'s use of Official Truth. The real story of this story is not what the Russians are up to, nor the plans of the Americans, but what *The Times* had in mind.

In the past two years important books have been published by sociologists like Gaye Tuchman (*Making News*) and Todd Gitlin (*The Whole World Is Watching*) that help provide answers to this question. Borrowing from Erving Goffman, both writers argue that one of the tasks of the media, particularly the elite institutions like *The New York Times*, is to structure reality into frames that make sense to readers. Moreover, the frames themselves change over time, just as reality does, so that media institutions that aspire to leadership are continuously engaged in changing frames, in influencing perceptions and in turn being influenced by them. As Gitlin shows, *Times* coverage of the antiwar movement began to change as elite opinion swung against the Vietnam War, settling on a policy of trying to divide the antiwar movement into radical and respectable camps. Particularly during periods of crisis, one should not view the media as simply trying to put something over on people. The process of framing and changing frames is more subtle than that, and also more uncertain.

Vietnam was a major period of crisis for a respectable institution like *The New York Times*. Long used to its status in the American establishment, *The Times* saw itself not as an outsider covering government but as the New York branch of government. When Daniel Ellsberg told *Times*man Neil Sheehan about the Pentagon Papers, the newspaper, as Harrison Salisbury recounts in his book *Without Fear or Favor*, was thrown into a tizzy. Reporters like Sheehan, embittered by the lies they uncovered while in Saigon, were determined to publish the story, while the respectables, such as *Times* attorney Louis Loeb, were aghast. Caught between these two conceptions of the function of an elite institution, editors Max Frankel and A. M. Rosenthal, after some internal struggle, made the decision to print, a courageous act given their political outlook and social ties. *The Times* found itself on the wrong side of a governmental lawsuit. It also survived, even prospered. For a time, *The Times* conducted a running contest with *The Washington Post* over which paper could be more subversive, if only of the Nixon Administration. What a heady feeling it must have been for a newspaper to act like a newspaper, after all those years of currying official favor.

Salisbury views the changes *The Times* underwent, as a result of the Pentagon Papers decision, as permanent. A superb reporter and marvelous storyteller, Salisbury does not understand the ebb and flow of American politics. The notion of *Times*-as-dissenter was as permanent as Nixon's New American Revolution. Within one year of the publication of Salisbury's book, the frame was changing once again. When the opinion of the elite changes, Frankel once said, then naturally *The Times* changes with it. Never comfortable in the role of critic, and even less happy supporting policies that seemed to detract from American power in the world, many individuals and institutions are

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more comfortable with the clichés of the cold war. The seven-part series on the unpreparedness of the American military is another chapter in the story of *The Times* against itself, the reassertion of respectability against the unfortunate necessity of practicing real journalism into which the extremity of Vietnam and then Watergate forced it.

Framing, as opposed to news reporting, does not accomplish its purpose by reciting facts—more by setting a mood. When *The Times* gave favorable coverage to the "moderate" wing of the peace movement and undermined the Nixon Administration, it did so by adjective and innuendo, by highlighting certain events and ignoring others, by the careful selection of pictures. In order to establish a new frame—more correctly, reassert an older one—the seven-part series in *The Times* used a number of techniques, of which the following can be taken as representative:

§ *Misplaced Emphasis.* Typical of the *Times* series as a whole was the third story on the sorry state of the Air Force. From the headline to the poignant quotes from officers about being unable to feed their kids, one has the picture of planes that cannot fly and a service that is unable to defend the United States. But this, as it turns out, is only the emphasis *The Times* chose to give. In reality, it was a nonstory. "Pilot for pilot, plane for plane, we are substantially better than the Soviet Union," the Air Force Chief of Staff is quoted as saying. The Commander of the 57th Air Division says, "I have absolutely no doubt that if the buzzer went off right now, our B-52s would take off and strike their targets. . . ." A careful reading of the whole story reveals only that the Air Force is unprepared to fight a *lengthy* war. Yet not even this is news; peacetime armies are never equipped to fight a lengthy war. Their job is to hold the line until wartime production takes up the slack—which a lengthy war would allow. The task of a peacetime Air Force is to deliver nuclear weapons quickly in an emergency, which everyone agrees can be done. There is simply no story here, yet the misplaced emphasis of *The Times* establishes a mood of concern. "Air Force Ready for Any Emergency" would have been a headline for this story fully as accurate as the scary one chosen ("Losses of the Skilled From Air Force Prompt Concern Over Its Readiness").

§ *The Dangling Authority.* "In many ways, the deterioration of the military's industrial base has exceeded the decline in the economy's commercial sector, military experts say." Not only are the experts unidentified but so are the "many ways." If there is a solid bit of fact or news in this sentence, I cannot discern it. The following sentence, not in the *Times* series, has more content and is more correct, but it would not serve the function of frame-changing: "Experts like Columbia University's Seymour Melman have demonstrated that the civilian economy has been depleted because of the voracious appetite of an inefficient military sector."

§ *The Possible as Potential.* The Pentagon, by its very nature, must accept a worst-case analysis of its antagonist. But must *The New York Times*? "The Russians are currently building a force of powerful long-range nuclear missiles that could potentially knock out more than 90 percent of America's Minuteman missiles in a nuclear attack within the next year." *Within the next year?* "Moreover, military scientists have told Congress that Moscow, over the next ten years, could find, with the help of satellites, ways to detect and destroy the Navy's forty-one missile-carrying submarines." These are hotly debated propositions, most strongly asserted by those who would benefit most if they were accepted as true. A disinterested reporter would be skeptical of such claims and would seek a more objective assessment. For example, "The general consensus among neutral commentators is that U.S. submarines are, and will continue to be, invulnerable to a crippling Soviet first strike." But *The Times*, we must remind ourselves, is not reporting; it is establishing a frame, and for that task, its discussion of remote possibilities as potential occurrences makes sense.

§ *Decontextualization. The Times* managed to find and print a picture of an Army recruiting station in Detroit in which not one of the thirteen volunteers is black. One would not know from reading the story on manpower problems that we are in the midst of a national recession and that most armed forces volunteers are black. Similarly, comparisons of U.S. and Soviet weapons choices are not placed into context. In geopolitics, as in the ballroom, it takes two to tango, yet in the world of *The New York Times*, only one side's intentions and capabilities are seriously considered. Imagine the following headline: "Soviets Deploy New Missiles as MIRVing by U.S. Destabilizes Arms Race."

§ *The Straw Problem.* Throughout the series, *The Times* poses a nonproblem, and then finds, not unexpectedly, that the United States is unprepared to solve it. "Nevertheless," one story says, "America's all-volunteer Army is one of the largest in the world, and it is roughly meeting its numerical recruiting goals. Its equipment and weaponry are reasonably up to date, and a drive toward technical modernization is underway. Why, then, are there misgivings about its capacity to win wars?" Why indeed? What is the problem? We are then told (for the second time in the series, by the way) that there is such a shortage of .45-caliber ammunition that men no longer know how to operate submachine guns. We are also informed that fuel would be difficult to obtain in an emergency. *The Times* is stretching here. Framing the story demands that a problem be found, but none seem to be visible. Is our national security threatened because not enough of our soldiers know how to operate submachine guns? Eventually, this story solves the nonproblem by simply moving on to another topic and talking about morale. Nonetheless, the idea is implanted that Americans have to worry, because not finding a problem is as worrisome as finding one. News this is not, but if your purpose is to establish a mood of uncertainty and confusion, a straw problem works as well as any other.

A decision to frame, as opposed to a decision to report the news is a conscious and deliberate affair. News reporting assumes that the world is out there to cover; in that sense, it is routine, unreflective, everyday work. But to change a frame means to alter a course, to announce symbolically that one has done so and to wait expectantly for

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the reaction. Salisbury's description of the intense debate preceding the decision to publish the Pentagon Papers reveals that at stake was not only the possibility of a lawsuit but the anxiety unleashed when one fundamentally alters one's role in the world. It would be a mistake, I think, to conclude that *The Times, as an institution*, has decided to join the arms race. For one thing, there were at least three pieces on the newspaper's Op-Ed page in the weeks following the series, by Flora Lewis, Jerome Wiesner and Seymour Melman, that were implicitly critical of its assumptions. For another, *The Times* does not have a monolithic decision-making structure, as Salisbury points out. For a third, information on decision making at *The Times* is as hard for an outsider to obtain as it is at the Pentagon. (Calls to the managing editor's office during the preparation of this article went unreturned.) Nonetheless, space is money, and the fact that *The Times* gave so much valuable space to this series is an indication that at least some people on 43rd Street have decided to intervene in the debate on the military budget on the side of more spending.

The Times can play an important role in resolving this debate. Coalitions in favor of cold-war policies are formed in the United States when the center attempts to co-opt the growing strength of the right by adopting its programs. The cold-war atmosphere of the late 1940s, for example, was solidified when a significant number of Democrats shifted from the New Deal to anti-Communism as the core principle of their outlook on the world. In recent years, there has been a decline in the importance of political parties in American life and also a withering away of a centrist consensus on foreign policy. For a shift to take place, then, some surrogate institution must become the cement between the center and the right, shaping influential opinion in order to fashion a new consensus. Whether *The Times* is consciously aware of these realities or not, it is in a unique position to take on the role played by the anti-Communist liberals in the 1940s: giving respectability to the charges of a nativistic right wing that has never been completely trusted by the American people.

The Times is trusted, at least by those better-off Americans who consider themselves informed about the world and want to hold judicious opinions on matters of substance. When *The Times* changed frames in the early 1970s and began to oppose the war in Vietnam, it searched for moderate alternatives to the radical antiwar movement, which it feared was polarizing the country. Now that *The Times* is shifting back to respectability, it will seek to carve out an area of moderation on the arms race distinct from the rantings of the extreme right. We will be told that America is in trouble, but not so much trouble that it must completely alter its way of life. We will be asked to increase our defense, but not at the cost of bankrupting our economy. We must be firm, not warlike; a leader, not a bully; armed, not dangerous. There must be a center. There has to be a center. Please let there be a center.

To reclaim its role as the conscience of the center, *The Times*, like the Government itself, finds that it must put its "Vietnam syndrome" behind it. In the past two years, Zbigniew Brzezinski has gone out of his way to announce, even when not asked, that America will no longer be afraid to protect its interests. Does the publication of *The Times*'s seven-part series on military unpreparedness indicate that the Pentagon Papers era of guilt-induced doubt is over and that *The Times* once again plans to assume its role as the newspaper of imperial record? We cannot know for sure, but the fact that *The Times* gave over part of its first page for seven days running to a nonstory filled with Pentagon propaganda certainly suggests that both fear and favor are once again in fashion in Times Square. □

COMMUNAL STRIFE IN INDIA

Mrs. Gandhi Lays Down the Law

JAMES TRAUB

India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi recently promulgated the so-called National Security Ordinance of 1980, which authorizes the preventive detention of individuals likely to foment violence (as well as of black marketeers and smugglers). The ordinance stands as a symbol of the complete failure of her Government—and other parties—to stem the rising tide of communal friction in India. Mrs. Gandhi's critics have been quick to describe the ordinance as a sword of Damocles intended to keep them in their place. But since the Prime Minister has less to fear at the moment from a divided and ineffectual opposition—her Congress Party enjoys close to a two-thirds majority in the lower house—than from a disillusioned and impatient electorate, it seems reasonable to take the ordinance at face value.

The new measure probably became necessary, from Mrs. Gandhi's point of view, with the recent resurgence of Hindu-Moslem violence in northern India. Regional and caste bloodshed have proved equally embarrassing to the Prime Minister's new regime. Mrs. Gandhi regained power this past January by promising "a government that works." With the economy stuck in its usual rut, Mrs. Gandhi knows that she had better deliver on law and order, especially for the Moslems and low-caste Hindus who voted for her in hopes that she would deliver them from violence and persecution. But the ordinance is simply another in a long line of Mrs. Gandhi's police solutions to economic and cultural problems.

As a patchwork of cultures cobbled into a nation, and a desperately poor one to boot, India suffers from a horrendous array of religious and racial tensions. Hindu-Moslem strife burst into gory prominence last August when an unfounded rumor that pigs had defiled a mosque in Morada-

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bad, a city in northern Uttar Pradesh, led to riots that killed 142 people in that city and elsewhere in the province. New local ordinances similar to Mrs. Gandhi's were aimed at the R.S.S., the paramilitary wing of a powerful Hindu nationalist party called the Jana Sangh. Mrs. Gandhi's long-standing popularity among Moslems stems not only from her bromides on law and order but her refusal to cater to the Hindu chauvinists. Yet even if the police, often susceptible to R.S.S. influence, do manage to arrest provocateurs, the new ordinance cannot bridge the growing gulf of suspicion and hostility between Hindus and Moslems.

There are other areas of internecine strife in India besides religion, but the greatest threat is caste violence. Most caste violence is initiated by the land-owning class; fearful of claims advanced by the landless or marginal farmers, it launches savage, pre-emptive strikes against them, often with the cooperation of the police. To take a single example: in late 1978, when a landlord from the village of Bajitpur, in Bihar, illegally occupied a tract of common land, peasants lodged a complaint. The landlord retaliated by hiring a gang of thugs who rampaged through the village in broad daylight, raping the women and beating up the men, ransacking homes, destroying crops and poisoning wells. The Superintendent of Police took three days to arrive at the scene; the attackers turned themselves in and were released after two hours.

The violence in Bajitpur, like many such events, took place while the Janata Party, and not the Congress Party, was ruling from New Delhi and the Bihar statehouse. At the time, Mrs. Gandhi blamed the violence on "junta misrule"; the opposition now routinely pins the blame for rural bloodshed on Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party. But the politicization of communal violence only takes everyone off the hook by obscuring the real nature and depth of the problem.

"Everything in India is half finished," political observer Romesh Thapar has written. Development programs have proceeded just far enough to enrich a small group of farmers, excite the envy of others and undermine the caste system's ancient foundations. Economic disparities and incomplete reforms, according to economist Francine Frankel, "erode[d] traditional patron-client ties to uncover the economic conflicts at the core of caste divisions." The Green Revolution, with its gifts of high-yielding seeds, tractors, fertilizer and irrigation, has created a prosperous class of farmers owning ten or more acres. But they make up only 4 percent of all farmers. Fifty percent of India's farmers own two-and-a-half acres or less, and 20 percent own no land at all. Both those figures are rising. Real rural wages declined 15 percent from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, as did the amount of work available; the number of families in debt rose by the same proportion. Unemployment has shot out of control. Mrs. Gandhi promised to abolish poverty in 1972. The Congress Party has been promising land reform since the first Five-Year Plan in 1952; as of 1977, a grand total of 1.29 million surplus acres, out of at least twenty million, had been distributed. The last three national elections have resulted in overwhelming defeats for the establishment. Is it any wonder that the Indian voter has grown disgusted with politicians, as well as with his own lot?

Mrs. Gandhi has made her own special contribution to the turmoil. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, went to great lengths to preserve the nation's fragile consensus, believing that in a nation as young and unruly as India all points of view must be represented and reconciled in a sole ruling party. But under Mrs. Gandhi, politics has become a theater of national strife rather than a forum for compromise; rampant party-switching has replaced ideological debate; and state assemblies and local councils, traditionally the focus of voter concern, have lost their independence to a central government increasingly intolerant of the usual Indian political ruckus. The Congress Party has lost its unquestioned legitimacy, while internal squabbles of the opposition parties when they held power only widened national cynicism. And class, caste and religious groups have learned the lesson that power can be won or maintained only through intimidation and strife.

India has balked at the threshold of change. Peasants have heard the sermons of development officers, town dwellers have been entertained and disillusioned by the solemn vows of politicians; both have begun to shrug off generations of hopelessness. But as the promises wear thin, and the idea of consensus provokes only nostalgia, the poor turn against one another, or against their real or imagined oppressors. Only a politics of legitimacy can prevent India from coming apart further at the seams. As V. S. Naipaul writes in his bitter book, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, "What until now has passed for politics and leadership in India has been left behind by the uncontrollable millions." □

THE CANCER FALLOUT DEBATE

Lest We Envy The Dead

In 1962, The Nation *published the findings of the Physicians for Social Responsibility, a newly formed group of doctors dedicated to alerting the medical profession to the medical and ethical consequences of thermonuclear war.*

Now, in 1980, with the increased sophistication of our weaponry, the medical consequences of a nuclear attack are far grimmer and the chances of nuclear holocaust far greater, according to the Physicians for Social Responsibility. They argue that U.S. Government studies of the effects of nuclear war have been misleading and have in fact resulted in the advocacy of limited war under the incorrect assumption that there will be survivors after a nuclear attack.

The group has begun to reassert itself in the hope of fully educating the public on the consequences of nuclear war. The following is a speech given by Dr. John W. Gofman at a two-day symposium sponsored by the Physicians for Social Responsibility in New York City on September 27 and 28.

—The Editors

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JOHN W. GOFMAN, M.D.

Over the past fifteen years, as I have been upgrading my estimates of the cancer and leukemia risk per unit of radiation, as newer epidemiological data become available I have become convinced that differences among the medical profession on this question contribute to the likelihood of nuclear war. We are now quite able to make a very sound assessment of the medical consequences of radiation exposure at all dose levels. Recently, in preparing my book *Radiation and Human Health*, I analyzed all the world epidemiological studies, using techniques that permit the integration of the diverse human data into a single, consistent analysis. Let me quote the results of my analysis and compare them with the results presented by quasi-official bodies. My results show the expected number of cancer fatalities from the administration of one rad—a unit of radiation absorbed by the body—to everyone in a mixed population of one million people. My estimate is that there will be 3,771 cancer deaths, while the National Academy of Science's 1979 Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR-III Draft Report) shows between 70 and 353 cancer deaths, and the United Nations Scientific Committee Report shows 100 cancer deaths.

As a result of its faulty methods of analysis, the BEIR Committee has underestimated the radiation-induced cancer risk by between eleven- and fifty-fourfold, and the United Nations Committee by approximately thirty-eight times. Since the findings of quasi-official committees like these are used by military planners in designing their scenarios for nuclear war, their estimates of cancer fatalities will be eleven to fifty-four times too low. I shall have more to say on these underestimates, but first let's look at the myths implicit in most radiation-cancer estimates.

The first myth concerns the so-called linear hypothesis, which holds that the risk of cancer is proportional to the dose of radiation, and that there is no such thing as a safe, or "permissible," dose of radiation with respect to cancer induction. The myth is that the linear hypothesis overestimates the cancer risk of ionizing radiation. The evidence indicates quite the opposite. Actually, the relationship is *supra-linear*; that is, the cancer risk *per unit of radiation* is greater at low total radiation doses than it is at high doses. Thus, the linear model *underestimates* the cancer risk.

It is also a myth that the likelihood of cancer is lessened by slow delivery of ionizing radiation. Several studies show that radiation delivered slowly (approximately one rad whole-body radiation per year) produced a *larger* effect per unit dose than radiation delivered in a single high dose.

Another myth is that fractionation of ionizing radiation will help reduce the cancer risk. Careful studies of breast cancers resulting from ionizing radiation have shown that a series of small doses offers no protection. Even worse, studies of bone cancers induced by radium 224 show that fractionation of the dose actually increased the number of such cancers per unit of alpha particle irradiation.

In interpreting cancer evidence, two basic concepts are needed. The first is the concept of the *person-rad*. This is a unit obtained by multiplying each person's dose by one, then adding up all the person-rads. Thus, a person exposed to ten rads represents a dose of ten person-rads, and the exposure of ten persons to one rad each represents a dose of ten person-rads. We can calculate directly how many fatal cancers within a given population will occur from exposure if we know the total number of person-rads delivered, even though individual doses vary widely.

The second concept is that of the *cancer dose*. The cancer dose is defined as the number of person-rads that must be delivered to a population sample (no matter how many persons are in the sample) to guarantee *one* fatal cancer. The cancer dose is based upon the human epidemiological evidence and its analysis. Let us illustrate the use of these cancer doses in calculating the consequences of nuclear war. There is a school of thought that estimates potential survival of various acute doses of radiation. For example, the LD_{50} (the lethal dose for 50 percent of recipients) is often given as 350 rads of whole-body radiation for a particular age. This leaves the impression that those who receive a dose below 350 rads are in the clear. That is simply not so. For 10-year-old male children, the cancer dose is eighty-eight rads of whole-body radiation. For every male child *under* 10 years of age, the cancer dose is even lower than eighty-eight rads. Therefore, for every male child at 10 years of age or less who receives more than eighty-eight rads of whole-body radiation, death from cancer is a certainty, with an average curtailment in normal life expectancy of from eighteen to twenty-two years. This need *not* be acute radiation from a nuclear explosion—a cumulative dose of eighty-eight rads in the aftermath would also cause the cancer death. A female child at 10 years of age or younger who accumulates 104 rads of whole-body radiation is essentially guaranteed premature death from cancer, unless death from another cause supervenes. The average loss of life span would be approximately twenty-four to twenty-nine years.

Of course, there is no reason to confine ourselves to children. For 25-year-old males, we find the cancer dose to be 201 person-rads. This is well below the LD_{50} for acute radiation. But males under 25 years of age at exposure who receive 201 rads of whole-body radiation or more are virtually certain to develop a fatal cancer and to lose between 12.8 and 22.3 years of life span, on the average, unless other death causes supervene.

For amounts of radiation less than a full cancer dose, the calculations are straightforward. Take a man who is 25 years of age and for whom the cancer dose is 201 person-rads. Suppose this man received forty rads in a nuclear war or from fallout. He is unlikely to contract any serious radiation sickness. But what of his cancer risk in the future? For one person, a dose of forty rads means forty person-rads. Since 201 person-rads guarantees one fatal cancer, that is, a

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risk of 1.0 development of a fatal cancer, it follows that forty person-rads gives a risk of 40/201, or .199. Let us round this off to .2. The interpretation is that this man has a probability of .2, or 20 percent, of developing a fatal cancer from the radiation. Stated otherwise, one out of every five men so exposed will die of radiation-induced cancer and the average life span reduction of those who do die of such cancer will be about thirteen years.

There are two common distortions of the evidence regarding genetic and chromosomal damage inflicted by radiation from the atomic blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first holds that there were no genetic injuries as a result of the atomic bombings. The second distortion runs, "If you can't find a genetic effect in two entire cities that were bombed, the genetic effects of atomic radiation must surely be small."

But a 1974 study by J.V. Neel, H. Kato and W.J. Schull of the genetic effects of radiation on the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki concludes otherwise. The study sought out deaths from radiation-induced genetic abnormalities that occurred before the age of 17 years. Overcoming the great difficulties making such a study posed, Neel, Kato and Schull found a positive correlation between a father's exposure to radiation from the bomb and his offspring's death before 17 years of age. The inspiration for this distortion rests on an ill-considered statement in the Neel, Kato and Schull paper, which reflected the fact that the findings had a statistical significance of only 5 percent, prompting Neel and his co-workers to observe: "In a question of this importance, we believe a finding should be unequivocally significant before being trumpeted as such." This is a far cry from saying, "No genetic effects were found in the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," a statement that would in no way represent the actual findings of Neel, Kato and Schull.

The significance of reactions within the medical profession to these estimates of radiation-induced cancer and genetic injury is that it can affect the likelihood of a nuclear war. Numerous factors are taken into account by nuclear-war planners, especially those designing a first-strike capability. A first-strike capability does not presuppose the ability to attack and receive no damage in return; it posits attacking and receiving only "*acceptable* damage" in return. In evaluating "acceptable damage," nuclear-war strategists consider economic recovery potential, capital equipment destruction, the number of immediate deaths and other factors, including health effects. Obviously, the lower the estimates of the cancer and genetic effects from radiation exposure are, the more attractive the use of nuclear weapons will become to a military planner, for he will consider the losses on his side to be less, the lower the cancer and genetic effects of radiation are. I am not suggesting that military planners really *care* how many people die during or after a nuclear war. But, obviously, the lower the cancer and genetic effects are estimated to be, the easier it is for such people to decide that they *have* achieved a first-strike capability—i.e., that only "acceptable damage" will be incurred by starting a nuclear war.

The very same rulers who might consider launching a nuclear war, if "only" 10 percent of their own subjects would die, might *reject* the same scenario if the average dose to their subjects were on the order of eighty-five rads and would condemn everyone under 10 years of age to die prematurely of cancer. After all, to have survivors who are either totally demoralized or enraged presents political problems, to say the least.

That is why semiofficial estimates of radiation effects that are too low, such as those by BEIR-III and the U.N. Scientific Committee cited above, help to increase the likelihood of nuclear war. The less harmful military planners think the consequences to their side will be, the more likely they will be to use nuclear weapons.

We are often told that scientists disagree about the effects of radiation, but let me assure you that the so-called radiation controversy is as resolved now, among the full-time experts, as it is ever going to be, because there will *always* be scientifically correct and scientifically incorrect ways to analyze existing data. Thus, no matter how much additional data are generated, incorrect ways of analyzing these data will also be generated, and the experts will continue to disagree.

When experts disagree on a matter you care about, on a matter with life-and-death implications for millions or even billions of people, on a matter which you have the education and natural ability to comprehend well, then you must do your own evaluation. I invite you to compare the scientific merits of my own estimates and those of Dr. Karl Z. Morgan, Dr. Arthur Tamplin and Elizabeth Shafer and others with the estimates published by the quasi-official committees, whose figures are many times lower. The correct analysis of radiation effects will help decrease the probability of nuclear war during these crucial decades as we seek to understand and control the causes of war. □

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TYRANNY IN GUYANA

Jonestown Nation

PENNY LERNOUX

Mention a black dictatorship in the Caribbean, and Haiti automatically comes to mind. Unfortunately, it is not the only such government in the region: Guyana's police state may soon rival the Duvalier dynasty for brutality and corruption.

Thanks to Graham Greene's *The Comedians* and the notoriety of its rulers, Haiti is relatively familiar to Americans. In contrast, Guyana's descent into dictatorship has taken place almost unobserved, presumably because the English-speaking nation forms part of the obscure Guianas perched on the northeastern hump of the South American mainland. (The others are Suriname and French Guiana.) With no tourist attractions and almost no industry, except sugar and bauxite, Guyana does not draw many visitors. The Government encourages such isolation by harassing and even deporting foreigners on their arrival at Georgetown's Timehri Airport. Although the 1978 Jonestown massacre was well publicized, reporters tended to treat it as an isolated event, unrelated to national politics or the parapolice activities of an equally unsavory sect known as the House of Israel.

During the early 1960s, before Britain granted the colony independence, British Guiana was frequently in the news because of savage racial violence between the descendants of African slaves and East Indian indentured servants. "Red" Cheddi Jagan, the then Prime Minister, also made a few waves with his leftist rhetoric, causing London and Washington to conspire to oust him. The Central Intelligence Agency used the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s American Institute for Free Labor Development as cover to stir up labor unrest. Britain did its part by rigging the 1965 elections, a year before independence, to insure that the East Indian leader lost to his more "moderate" black opponent, Forbes Burnham, even though Jagan commanded more votes. At the time, Burnham claimed to be a nationalist and a socialist who would heal the racial rift supposedly caused by the Marxist Jagan. In fact, racial differences dated to the colonial period when the British ruled by dividing the two groups—and treating both as "bloody wogs."

While the racial wounds have begun to heal in recent years, that is due primarily to the growing opposition of blacks, as well as Indians, to Burnham's autocratic rule. An ambitious, devious man, Burnham played the role of a modest and loyal British subject so long as Whitehall remained in charge. But the masquerade ceased once Guyana achieved independence. In addition to such trappings of wealth as flashy limousines and a stable of horses, Burnham revealed a monumental ego and a disdain bordering on hatred of both Britons and Americans. But despite repeated attempts to claim Third World leadership in Africa and the English-speaking Caribbean, Guyana's Prime Minister inspired no-confidence. Even among his Caribbean neighbors, he has been accepted on sufferance, and then only because Guyana belongs to the Caribbean Community.

Taking a leaf from the British, Burnham rigged the 1968 elections by inflating his votes from fake overseas electoral rolls. Soldiers seized and stuffed the ballot boxes during the 1973 elections and a 1978 constitutional referendum, which gave Burnham's People's National Congress (P.N.C.) the power to prolong itself indefinitely in Government and Burnham himself "virtually imperial powers," according to Sam Silkin, attorney general of Britain's last Labor Government. In October, Burnham was installed as Guyana's first President under the new constitution. An election will be held in January to confirm him in the Presidency and choose a new parliament. (The opposing parties have threatened to boycott this election, charging that it will be fraudulent.)

Since the referendum, the country has rapidly declined—the economy a shambles, the British-bequeathed parliamentary system a facade for one-party dictatorship. Press freedoms have been severely curtailed, restrictions on internal travel established and independent labor unions harassed and persecuted. Student groups and the Catholic Church also have suffered Government repression. A typically Latin American police state has been erected, controlling the judiciary as well as the parliament and Government. Even by South American standards, the ratio of military and police to civilians is high: one to thirty-five. In addition, various parapolice groups have been organized, in the style of Haiti's Tonton Macoutes, including goon squads from the House of Israel, an anti-Christian, anti-Indian sect whose black American leader, David Hill, or "Rabbi Washington," is wanted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for blackmail. In exchange for Government protection, the Rabbi's followers do Burnham's dirty work, including the murder of an English Jesuit, Father Bernard Drake, who was stabbed to death last year outside the Georgetown police station.

While Jagan's People's Progressive Party (P.P.P.) has suffered periodic persecution, Burnham directs the bulk of his ire at the Working People's Alliance (W.P.A.), formed three years ago along multiracial lines. Unlike the P.P.P., which is still largely dependent on the East Indian vote and aligned with Moscow, the W.P.A. is an independent leftist movement with considerable support among disaffected blacks, as well as Indians and Portuguese, Guyana's third major ethnic group. The fastest growing party in the country, the W.P.A. challenges Burnham's original claim to power by offering a political alternative to blacks that is based not on racist advantage but the common good.

Using a forty-four-page hit list, called "Recognition Handbook—Working People's Alliance," the Burnham regime is systematically picking off the W.P.A. leadership.

Penny Lernoux, The Nation's Latin American correspondent, is author of the recently released Cry of the People *(Doubleday), a survey of the role the Catholic Church has played in political changes in Latin America.*

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Last June, Walter Rodney, a prominent black historian and political activist, was murdered in a bomb explosion, the fifth W.P.A. leader to die or be seriously injured in eight months. Rodney was highly respected in the Caribbean and Africa for his writings on underdevelopment, and his death sent shock waves throughout the Caribbean. "The region's environment is being polluted by violence," commented Commonwealth Secretary General Shridath Ramphal on Rodney's assassination. As pointed out in a recent report by the London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations, "The hemispheric significance of Guyana lies not so much in the violence of its post-independence politics (Latin America provides many more extreme examples) but in the fact that the direction and pace of its political development threaten to make it the first chronic case in the Commonwealth Caribbean of a political system dependent on coercion rather than popular support." Burnham himself left no doubt that such was his intention by announcing that the Government would "crush and utterly destroy" its "enemies."

Typically, Washington not only has ignored Burnham's police methods but actually helped prop up the regime through the good offices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, both dominated by the United States. The I.M.F. recently agreed to provide the Government with a $135 million standby loan to keep the country afloat at a time when Guyana is spending 37 percent of the annual budget to service the foreign debt and foreign reserves have fallen to an all-time low, equal to only three or four weeks of imports. Long queues and even fights outside markets have become commonplace in Georgetown, unemployment stands at 20 percent and, for the last two years, the economy has registered zero growth.

Although the I.M.F. is lending Guyana four times its quota in the Fund, such uncommon generosity carries the I.M.F.'s usual high social price, including rises in the cost of rice, the principal staple in the Guyanese diet, and such public services as electricity and urban transport. A devaluation of the Guyana dollar is also under discussion. Protests by workers, already suffering from food shortages and a 21 percent annual inflation rate, have been met with armed force. As in other countries so "favored" by the I.M.F., the loan agreement will likely hasten militarization and a decline in the standard of living while increasing the country's foreign debt.

Informed Washington sources report that the I.M.F. package, and a complementary $15 million World Bank loan for a hydroelectrical project, reflect President Jimmy Carter's Caribbean policy to "check the spread of leftist influence" in the region. (It would not be the first time that the I.M.F. has served as the State Department's hatchet man in the area, Jamaica being a case in point.) The prob-

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lem with Washington's Caribbean policy is that it has not changed since the cold war. Even after all these years, Cheddi Jagan is still viewed as the principal danger in Guyana. No consideration has been given to the opposition created by Burnham's repressive methods, nor, apparently, to the longer-term consequences of a second black dictatorship in the Caribbean. "The United States has opposed the P.P.P. since 1953 and look at the situation we are in. A whole generation has been lost," a W.P.A. leader complains. "The problem is not the P.P.P.," he says, "but the economic, political and social mess that Burnham's P.N.C. has created. The United States does not know Guyana, just as it did not know Iran or Grenada or Nicaragua."

To judge by the see-no-evil, speak-no-evil policy of U.S. representatives in Guyana, the W.P.A. is not far off the mark. The U.S. Embassy quietly dropped the Jonestown affair without pressing Burnham for a public inquiry; similarly, nothing was said about Rodney's killing, despite the deluge of criticism from neighboring and African governments. As far as U.S. Ambassador George Roberts is concerned, the human-rights situation in Guyana is "fairly good." He added: "Human rights are very important, but it is not the only criterion to be looked into. We have other interests." □

OUR NEW ALLY

Appointment In Somalia?

FRED HALLIDAY

In a recent conversation with a prominent politician from the Sudan, I found myself asking what my interlocutor thought of the news that the United States was to acquire naval facilities in Somalia. The politician, who knew Somalia well, exploded: "Siad is an ass," he said, referring to Siad Barre, the Somali President. "First he played this game with the Russians. And look where it got him. Now he is playing the same game with the Americans. He will never learn."

What the Sudanese politician meant seemed roughly as follows: Somalia had given military facilities to the Soviet Union in the early 1970s and had received substantial military aid. During the Soviet buildup, however, it played down its claim to the Ogaden region of neighboring Ethiopia. Siad Barre told all who would listen that Somalia would *never* resort to force to solve the problem, and the Russians, who opposed any military action against Ethiopia, appeared to believe him.

Then in 1977, with the Somali forces well equipped and Ethiopia weakened by internal dissension, and with the Arab world offering him large sums of money to expel the Russians, Siad sent his army into Ogaden. At first he did well, and he was confident enough to expel the Russians altogether. But the Ethiopians fought back and in January 1978, with large quantities of new Soviet Army equipment and with the assistance of thousands of Cuban troops, the Somalis were driven out of Ogaden. Siad lost much of his army, and tens of thousands of refugees poured across the frontier into his impoverished country. The world escaped a major international crisis only because the Russians insured that the now victorious Ethiopians stopped at their own frontier. But not an inch of Siad's supposedly lost lands was wrested from Ethiopian control.

The Sudanese observer feared that the same thing may be happening again. The Americans want naval facilities in Somalia, as the Russians did before. Siad is again playing down his claim to Ogaden, without actually abandoning it. Once he has the Americans firmly installed and his armed forces re-equipped, there is little to stop Siad Barre from having another try and provoking a new international crisis. A U.S. administration keen to "hurt" the Russians would suit him fine.

It is not, however, only the Somalis who seem to have learned little from the Horn of Africa crisis of 1977-78. The Carter Administration also seems to have acted as if everything was easy in that thorny part of the world. Yet a closer examination of what happened shows that the 1977 crisis itself was in part a product of U.S. initiatives, and of a bungled attempt by the then newly elected Administration to score some points off the Russians. Siad claims that he was encouraged by the Americans to invade Ethiopia and that Washington then let him down. The public record is clear enough and appears to contradict Somali claims: the Carter Administration made evident its desire to win Somalia from the Russians and, in July 1977, offered to sell it "defensive" military supplies. But when, in early August 1977, it was obvious that the Somalis were invading Ethiopia, Washington canceled its offer.

Things were not, however, quite so simple. Siad had also received private encouragement from a special American envoy, New York tropical medicine expert and Democratic politician Dr. Kevin Cahill. Although the State Department at first denied any connection with Cahill, it later admitted that he had been briefed prior to his trip to Somalia by the department's legal counselor Matthew Nimetz. Cahill refuses to say what he told the Somalis, and the State Department later instructed him, in the words of one Horn of Africa desk official, to " bug out." But the Somalis insist that Cahill told them the United States supported an attack that would weaken the increasingly pro-Soviet Ethiopians, and these assurances, combined with the public-record statements of the Carter Administration, were enough to tip the balance.

What seems to have occurred is a typical case of uncoordinated initiative and Washington kite-flying, from which the Administration later tried to extricate itself. But these initiatives, combined with Arab incitement of the Somalis and

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the evident weaknesses of the Ethiopians, produced the disaster of the following months. A considerable degree of the responsibility for the arrival of the Cubans and Russians in the Horn must therefore lie with the ham-fisted officials who flirted with the Somalis in the first months of the Carter Administration.

Nothing in his past history suggests that Siad Barre is going to keep his word to American officials not to attack Ogaden any more than he did to the Russians. The son of an Ogaden mother, Siad was a policeman in the Italian fascist colonial administration and caught the eye of the British after opening fire on a nationalist demonstration in 1948 in which about fifty people were reported killed. When he came to power in October 1969, he implemented a number of beneficial economic measures, including a mass literacy campaign and a policy for settling nomads, but he kept power firmly in the hands of his own people. All five members of the "socialist" party's Politburo were generals; his son-in-law Ahmad Suleiman was made head of the security forces; and many other members of his Daro clan were given key posts in the Government. Law and order were insured by the Law of the Twenty-Six Articles of September 10, 1970, which punished striking or absenteeism by death and stipulated a five-to-fifteen-year prison sentence for the possession of seditious literature.

In a tribal society, ruled by a nationalistic military regime, irredentist claims like Somalia's to Ogaden serve a vital mobilizing role. Siad Barre may indeed be an ass, but in enticing the Americans into Somalia to replace the Russians, he is pulling the tail of what appear to be even bigger donkeys in Washington. □

Poison

(Continued From Front Cover)

or have never been registered for use here. Many have not been independently evaluated for their impact on human health or the environment. Others, like DDT, are familiar poisons, widely known to cause cancer, birth defects and genetic mutations. Yet the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act explicitly states that banned or unregistered pesticides are legal for export.

In the United States, a mere dozen multinational corporations dominate the $7-billion-a-year pesticide market. Many are conglomerates with major sales in oil, petrochemicals, plastics, drugs and mining. Not only do they manufacture hazardous pesticides but their subsidiaries in the Third World import and distribute them.

David Weir and Mark Schapiro are on the staff of the Center for Investigative Reporting in Oakland, California, and are the authors of the forthcoming Circle of Poison: Pesticides and People in a Hungry World *(Institute for Food and Development Policy).* *Research for the book and this article was supported by the Fund for Investigative Journalism.*

For example, Ortho in Costa Rica is the main importer of eight banned or heavily restricted U.S. pesticides—parathion, DDT, aldrin, dieldrin, heptachlor, chlordane, endrin and BHC. Ortho is a division of Chevron Chemical Company, an arm of Standard Oil of California. In Ecuador, Shell, Velsicol, Bayer, American Cyanamid, Hercules and Monsanto are the main importers of pesticides banned or restricted in the United States—aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, heptachlor, kepone, mirex and toxaphene. In the Philippines, Bayer and Pfizer import methyl parathion and malathion respectively. The Ministry of Agriculture of Colombia registers fourteen multinationals which import practically all the pesticides banned by the United States since 1970. And in the Philippines, the giant food conglomerate Castle & Cooke (Dole brand) imports banned DBCP for its banana and pineapple operations there.

Worldwide, pesticide sales are exploding. The amount of pesticides exported from the United States has almost doubled over the last fifteen years. The industry now produces four billion pounds of pesticides each year—more than one pound for every person on earth. Almost all are produced in the industrial countries, but 20 percent are exported to the Third World.

And the percentage exported is likely to increase rapidly. The G.A.O. predicts that during the decade ending in 1984, the use of pesticides in Africa, for example, will more than quintuple. As the U.S. pesticide market is "approaching saturation . . . U.S. pesticide producers have been directing their attention toward the export potential . . . exports have almost doubled since 1965 and currently account for 30 percent of total domestic pesticide production," the trade publication *Chemical Economics Newsletter* noted.

Moreover, in Third World fields most pesticides are applied to luxury export crops. Approximately 10 percent of the food imported into the United States contains illegal levels of pesticides, as we pointed out. But that 10 percent figure is deceptive. The F.D.A.'s most commonly used analytical method fails to measure 70 percent of the almost 900 food tolerances for cancer-causing pesticides. (A tolerance is the amount of a pesticide allowed in any particular food product.)

In addition, the F.D.A. frequently finds mysterious, unknown chemicals in imported foods. Government investigators believe that some of these fugitive chemicals come from the millions of pounds of "unregistered" pesticides the Environmental Protection Agency allows U.S. manufacturers to export without divulging any information about their chemical makeup or their effects on people or the environment.

Knowing how little we know, we suspect these statistics from the G.A.O. probably represent only the tip of the iceberg. For example, over 15 percent of the beans and 13 percent of the peppers imported from Mexico during one recent period were found to violate F.D.A. pesticide residue standards. Nearly half the imported green coffee beans contain levels (from traces to illegal residues) of pesticides that are banned in the United States. Freshly cut flowers flown in

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from Colombia caused a rash of organophosphate poisonings among American florists. And imported beef from Central America often contains pesticide contamination. The G.A.O. has estimated that 14 percent of all U.S. meat is now contaminated with illegal residues, and imports make a significant contribution to that total.

The pesticide residue problem has escalated to such a level that all beef imports from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala have been halted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agricultural practices in those countries, including heavy pesticide use on crops next to cattle-grazing land, have backfired on ranchers raising beef for the U.S. market.

Despite the widespread contamination of imported food, F.D.A. inspectors rarely seize shipments or refuse them entry. Instead, a small sample is removed for analysis while the rest of the shipment proceeds to the marketplace—and the consumer. The rationale is that perishable food would spoil if held until the test results were known. But by the time the test results *are* available—showing dieldrin or parathion or DDT—the food has already found its way into our stomachs. Recalls are difficult.

During one recent fifteen-month period, government investigators found that *half* of all the imported food identified by the F.D.A. as pesticide-contaminated was marketed without any penalty to the importers or warnings to consumers. Even products from importers with repeated violations were routinely allowed to pass.

U.S.D.A. officials in Dallas, for example, noticed a strong "insecticide-like smell" in a batch of imported cabbage from an importer with a record of shipping contaminated products. Despite the department's complaint, the F.D.A. allowed the cabbage to go to market. A sample that had been removed for testing later revealed illegal levels of BHC, the dangerously carcinogenic pesticide whose registration was canceled in 1976 at the request of the Hooker Chemical Corporation. But it was too late to recall the cabbage. Pepper from a shipment that was sent on to supermarkets turned out to have twenty-nine times more pesticide residue than allowed by U.S. law.

In a world of growing food interdependence, we cannot export our hazards and then forget them. There is no refuge. The mushrooming use of pesticides in the Third World is a daily threat to millions there—and a growing threat to all consumers here.

There are those who argue that we need pesticides to produce more food for the hungry, and that pesticide dangers are a necessary evil—part of the price of averting famine. "We see nothing wrong with helping the hungry world eat," says an executive of the Velsicol Chemical Company, defending his company's overseas sales of Phosvel after it was banned in the United States. "Men will not starve because there are hazards in killing pests," says a Rohm & Haas official making the same point.

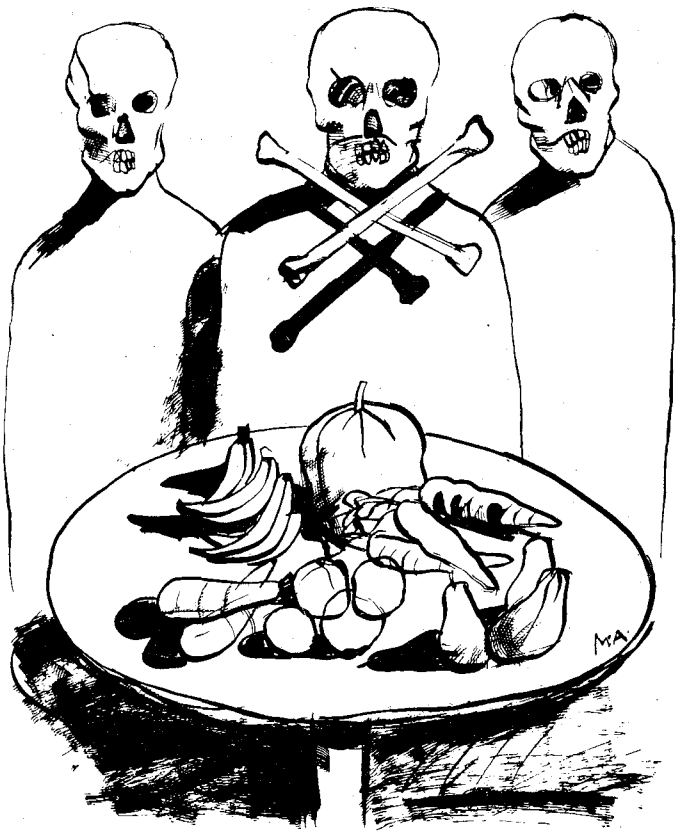
But over half, and in some countries up to 70 percent, of the pesticides used in underdeveloped countries are applied to crops destined for export. The poor and hungry may labor in the fields, exposed daily to pesticide poisoning, but they do not get to eat the crops protected by pesticides.

In Central America, 70 percent of the total value of agricultural production—mainly coffee, cocoa and cotton—is exported, despite widespread hunger and malnutrition there. Cotton is one of the biggest pesticide users. In tiny El Salvador, cotton production absorbs one-fifth of all the deadly parathion used in the world. Twenty-four hundred pounds of insecticides are used each year on every square mile of cotton field in the country. Yet cotton contributes to the global food supply only in processed cattle feed for Latin America's burgeoning beef production, almost half of which is exported to the United States and Europe. The meat remaining for local consumption is eaten by the rich and the middle classes, not by the hungry.

Herbicides like 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D (chemically similar to the infamous Agent Orange) are also used to help clear huge amounts of forest for grazing land in Latin America. Both herbicides leave residues of dioxin in the soil and water. Dioxin, one of the deadliest poisons ever developed, shows up later in birth defects, skin rashes and miscarriages.

In Indonesia, estate-style farms growing export crops—coconuts, coffee, sugar cane and rubber—consume twenty times the quantity of pesticides used by the small holders growing food for local markets. This despite the fact that small holders cultivate seven times more acreage than the estates.

Some might argue that although export crops do not directly feed hungry people, at least the foreign exchange earned benefits them indirectly: It is used to import economic necessities for development. But even the most superficial look at development in most Third World countries belies this assumption. Foreign exchange earned by



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agricultural exports does not return to improve the lives of the workers through better wages, housing, medical care or schools. Instead, the foreign exchange is most often plowed into luxury consumer goods, urban industrialization, tourist facilities and showy office buildings—all geared to the budgets and tastes of the top 10 to 20 percent living in the cities.

One reason pesticides are used more intensively on export crops than on subsistence food crops is that the multinational corporations which control the production and marketing of exports demand a blemish-free product. Nothing less, they say, will meet the discriminating standards of the consumers in Europe, North America or Japan.

"The Japs eat with their eyes" is how the manager of a Philippine banana plantation explained why they went to such lengths to produce a blemish-free fruit to ship to Japan. In the United States, too, it is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of insecticides used on fruits and vegetables serve only to improve their appearance.

Most people think of multinational food corporations in the Third World as big plantation owners. But over the last twenty years, corporations have become leery of owning land directly. As the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation warns, the possibility of "expropriation, revolution or insurrection [makes] plantations a poor risk." Multinational food producers and marketers such as Del Monte, United Brands (formerly United Fruit) and Castle & Cooke have hit upon a safer strategy—contract farming. Rather than own land directly, these companies now often contract with large local landowners to produce crops for export to consumers in the industrial countries.

A contract farming boom hit southern Mindanao, the Philippines, in the late 1960s. Before that time there were no bananas growing on its rich coastal plains. Small farmers and tenant farmers grew rice and coconuts. Then came the multinational corporations, seeking contracts with local entrepreneurs to produce bananas for the lucrative Japanese market. Within ten years the entire area was transformed: now twenty-one giant plantations cover 57,000 acres, and bananas have become one of the country's top agricultural exports. In order to fulfill their banana contracts, the local entrepreneurs had to push small holders, tenants and "squatters" off the land. (Some of the so-called squatters had worked the land for more than a generation.)

Although the multinational corporations may not own the land, they still call the shots. When a corporation signs a local entrepreneur under contract, it specifies not only the amount of fruit or other commodity to be produced but also the amount of fertilizers and pesticides to assure high yields and blemish-free products. Once locked into the banana-export contract, the plantation owner is totally dependent on the multinational firm. "Money is deducted from the banana grower's earnings to pay for things like pesticides and irrigation," explains Father Jerome McKenna, a U.S. missionary who worked in the area. "It's part of the contract. Those banana growers will be in debt to the pesticide companies for the rest of their lives."

Typically, pesticides are applied at three stages in the banana production process. Workers with heavy tanks strapped to their backs (and no masks or protective covering) routinely spray every tree. Twice a month a pesticide plane passes over the plantation, blanketing everything, including the drinking water supply. A group of banana workers recently petitioned Castle & Cooke to stop heavy pesticide spraying after local studies showed that the workers have dangerously low oxygen levels in their blood, making them more susceptible to disease.

In the packing sheds, the bananas are dumped into long water-filled troughs to remove some of the pesticides. "What bothers me most," says McKenna, "is that these people have very little protection from the chemicals they come in contact with. The women have their hands in the water up to their elbows all day long. They don't wear any gloves. Their only protection is plastic-type aprons they fashion for themselves." Finally, to protect the fruit during its long ocean voyage, women workers in the packing sheds spray every bunch of bananas with a fungus-killing agent.

McKenna checked at two nearby hospitals for reports of pesticide poisonings. One, run by Castle & Cooke, "didn't have any cases." But the other hospital, run independently of the company, had "reports all around of people poisoned by pesticides."

The contract farming system also gives the multinationals an easy way to avoid responsibility for pesticide poisoning. They can simply blame the local plantation owner for being careless.

The examples of cotton in El Salvador or bananas in the Philippines demonstrate that, in large measure, pesticides in the Third World actually feed the well-fed, but endanger the poor and the hungry. Since the mid-1950s, the growth rate of export crops has exceeded that of food crops. Between 1952 and 1967, for example, cotton acreage in Nicaragua increased fourfold while the acreage in basic grains was cut in half. Thus it is hardly surprising that the demand for pesticides in the Third World has soared. What is surprising is how many believe that their principal use is to save crops to feed the hungry.

For us, this investigation has contributed to an important realization: The problem cannot be reduced to that of the "rich countries" exploiting the "poor countries." Such a formulation turns the issue into "them versus us." The majority of people in *both* the industrial nations and the Third World are victims of the circle of poison. When we understood this, we began to understand our ties with Third World people in a new way. The differences in our material standards of living too often obscure our similarities—a common powerlessness in facing the increasing concentration of private power in the hands of a relatively few global companies. The reality of global corporate power, here reflected in the pesticide trade, forces us to seek solutions involving new ways of working *with* Third World people for a worldwide redistribution of economic power. We must begin to see Third World people not as a burden or a threat but as allies. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Notes on the Country Game

WILFRID SHEED

The 1980 World Series was supposed to feature the spoiled millionaires of Philadelphia vs. the enlightened millionaires of New York. I don't know what sort of millionaires they have in Kansas City—signals from the Sunbelt come in dimly on the Eastern Seaboard. But money and the modern ballplayer has been the talk all season, even when the lads fall to fighting over beanballs. (Nobody that rich wants to be hit in the head, goes the reasoning.)

Thus the Yankees put up with the bully-boy ravings of George Steinbrenner because they can't afford not to. New York is such a lucrative playground, in TV commercials alone, that Steinbrenner can chew out the help with impunity. Philadelphia apparently does not cast quite the same spell, so there the players chew out the manager instead. The question the World Series was *supposed* to answer was: which is better for you, to chew or be chewed.

The Series we got did suggest that perhaps these are not baseball questions at all but messy fallout from the gossip culture. The Phillies were supposed to hate their manager so much that they might well lose four straight, or whatever it took, just to spite him. The Kansas City Royals, who, it seems, only mildly dislike their manager, should have cashed in on this quirk of brotherly love handsomely—everybody else has who's had the good luck to encounter the Phillies in October, by which time they must be a ball of seething hate.

Yet when the blather had cleared, one team had made sixty hits and the other fifty-nine; one team (a different one) had outscored the other 4.5 to 3.9 per game—which I believe comes close to the average score of all ball games played anywhere since the beginning of time. In short, the verities triumphed over the froth of the press box. Baseball is so finely calibrated that the super teams win three out of five, and the dogs two out of five. It is not the least surprising to find two teams with exactly the same records after *160 games*. So a Series between *any* two big-league teams could be close. Yet in a World Series, these percentages fly out the window and everything is supposed to come down to character, as if ballplayers were prisoners of their nerves, like the rest of us.

The salient factor about this year's Series was that *neither* cast had been in one before. That took care of the stage-fright margin, or old Yankee edge. Maidenhood is everything in these matters. Yet while everyone else talked about money, the players themselves talked about character, as millionaires are wont to. The word must have a special meaning for them. Because as soon as a team begins to win, it *believes* it has character. Just let a couple of lucky hits fall in and the guys will say, "Yeah, we're that kind of team." The rhythm of streak and slump is so wild and unfathomable that the men riding it feel compelled to assert some kind of control over it. Contrariwise, in defeat the players "get down on themselves," search for scapegoats, question their own character. "We *proved* we had character," said the Phillies. Obviously. To win *is* to have character.

Morale also is more a function of winning than a cause of it: but it's a necessary function. It prolongs the streak from six wins to seven and picks up the junk game that could go either way, that magical third game in five.

There are some teams that sin against the Holy Ghost and reject the energy that victory brings. The Phillies were

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felt to be one of these, like the Red Sox. Pampered by country-club ownership, went the talk, they could not rise to the myth of team spirit, the sense that the Collective can somehow coordinate its private streaks and slumps to squeeze the extra game. Too rich, not hungry enough, injury-prone (injuries, strangely, are no excuse: character is supposed to thrive on them); teams like the Phillies are the pouting villains we need for our annual play-in-the-round.

Yet give one of them a hot hand—the Red Sox in '75, the Phillies last month—and you'll see who's pouty. Philadelphia did all the things rich brats are expressly supposed not to do. They came from behind four times in a row, counting the playoffs. Outfielder Bake McBride, the brat of brats, turned his orneriness into pure menace, treating the enemy as if they were his manager. Shortstop Larry Bowa, the team cynic, started seven double plays (a record) and cried with joy when it was all over. Pitcher Steve Carlton, who won't even talk to his friends, popped his fast ball so hard that the catcher's mitt sounded like a bat.

Perhaps the best symbol was third baseman Mike Schmidt because he seemed to personify defeat, almost to anticipate it, *without* being obnoxious, a more evolved mutant. Some dismal playoffs in the past had made him a loser in a Sartrean sense: i.e., *first* you lose, *then* you are a loser—you have defined yourself.

Yet suddenly he had his touch, and he seemed like a different man. And one realized how much one's concept of a team is a problem in perception, or propaganda. Because all the Phillies looked better in victory. For instance, the surliness in the clubhouse—was that really because they were counting their money, or was it because they just don't like reporters, the old-fashioned way? Being civilized to the press is often the only clue we have to these guys' personalities, and it isn't a bad one. But ballplayers from the outback can be unduly disturbed the first time they see themselves misquoted or laughed at in a big newspaper. A team, like an administration, is as lovable as its press corps makes it.

Baseball is pre-eminently the country game, because it takes up so much space, artificially transposed to the city where strangers boo you; the suspicious, uncommunicative rube has graced every clubhouse since Ring Lardner. In fact, you can probably find Steve Carlton himself somewhere in Lardner, right down to the hideous grimaces.

One of baseball's charming legends has Whitey Ford of New York City playing Henry Higgins to Mickey Mantle of Oklahoma and practically turning him into a boulevardier. Pete Rose struggles to perform the same task for the Phils, but it's tough work Higginsing half a squad. And of course the black styles of resentment practiced by McBride and Garry Maddox were undreamed of in Lardner, and will presumably have to be resolved outside the clubhouse.

As to those miserable objects, "today's kids," who allegedly can't stand discipline from an old-school manager—what about yesterday's kids, the Cleveland crybabies of 1940, or the Dodgers of '43, one of whom (Arky Vaughan) flung his uniform at Leo Durocher's feet? Ballplayers, rich or poor, have always been hard to handle—it is one of the few real tests of great managing—and a flinty-eyed brute like Rogers Hornsby had as little luck with it way back then as he would today.

On second thought, has anything changed as little as a major-league ballplayer, unless it be the game he plays? Babe Ruth holds a mirror to the 1920s, and the Gas House Gang might be said to reflect the Okie spirit of the 1930s. But it's a weak reflection. You might have guessed from the hairdos in the 1960s that *something* was happening in America, but what?

You can't deduce much about an era from its ballplayers. Solitary men in a solitary game, they make their way one by one into the big leagues and out again, always slightly to the side of normal society. The team spirit they invoke so fervently is always ad hoc, always this gang this year. Their teammates, while they last, are closer than family, but they are always being ripped apart and replaced. No wonder some players are withdrawn and others full of empty good cheer. A barmaid in Lindells of Detroit told me that ballplayers were the stingiest and least friendly of all the athletes who traipsed through the place. Yet there are the Tug McGraws and Pete Roses who thrive on the change and uncertainty of the gypsy life, and who can briefly ignite the rest—as long as the rest are winning anyway.

Team spirit has little to do with the hard numbers of baseball, though it can quasi-mystically keep batting rallies going (or is it the rally itself that creates the spirit?). This Series came down to Willie Wilson's strikeouts and Willie Aikens's stone glove, and all the character in the world couldn't have done a thing about that. If Wilson never plays another Series, he will become another Mike Schmidt, a loser; if the wheel spins right, he will become Mr. October II. He will still be the same player, but he will look different. Which may be why athletes don't think much of fans.

Otherwise, chalk a small one up for the brat who chews, and file this away under "arrestingly average." Nineteen eighty was the year the percentages came back in the guise of melodrama: in other words, it was baseball at its finest. □

Musty Gloom in the East

MORRIS DICKSTEIN

An unusually large number of distinguished foreign directors were on hand for this year's New York Film Festival. There was a special burst of enthusiasm for the return of Jean-Luc Godard and his new film, *Every Man for Himself*, and for *Kagemusha*, the remarkable new film by Akira Kurosawa. But despite these isolated highs, I can scarcely remember a time when the general atmosphere of the festival was more glum or the audience, usually very demonstrative, was so reserved. Perhaps the festival has finally succumbed to routine. Perhaps this was simply not a good year for world cinema. More likely this mood was the result of the downbeat tone and uneven quality of the numerous films from Eastern Europe that formed the center of gravity (in every sense) of this year's program.

The East European cinema is going through an exciting period of resurgence, but many of the films I saw exuded the musty gloom that was almost the signature of art-house movies of the 1940s and 1950s. This year's films, three

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of which were from Poland, had none of the gentle humor that was a hallmark of the small-scale movies made during the Prague spring. Perhaps too much has happened since then. Or perhaps it's simply that the Poles have always seemed even more Dostoyevskian than the Russians. Though the Poles no doubt have a great deal to be anxious about, it may be that the current liberalization removed the mantle of official optimism to expose the normal contours of the Polish sensibility.

The mistake we make with East European films is to look too much for social criticism and political dissidence. Film makers have long since gone beyond the thin, grim, Kafkaesque allegories about totalitarianism that occasionally slipped through the cracks in the 1950s. Superb recent films like Krzysztof Zanussi's *Camouflage* and Andrzej Wajda's *Without Anesthesia*, along with the Hungarian Pal Gabor's remarkable *Angi Vera*, do seem to have opened up an exciting vein of direct criticism that makes the East Europeans more probing commentators on their own society than any of our film makers are on ours. But these film makers seek not just the freedom to be critical but the freedom to be personal—perhaps gloomy and pessimistic, yes, perhaps even metaphysical and existential. They recognize that dissidence can become just another way of being constrained by the official culture.

On three consecutive days I saw movies that seemed at first to be political—Krzysztof Kieślowski's *Camera Buff*, Wajda's *The Orchestra Conductor* and István Szabó's *Confidence*—but which moved off deeply into themes of marital tension and discord. Though one of the films, *Confidence*, was set during World War II, a period of obsessive importance today for both the East Europeans and the French, there were times when I thought I kept seeing the same movie over and over. I found myself speculating on the divorce rate behind the Iron Curtain and on the effects of political strain and liberalization on personal relationships. I had similar feelings a week later when I saw Zanussi's *The Constant Factor*. On the political side it exposes a pervasive corruption on every level of an overly bureaucratized society. Yet it's also a film that broods movingly about parts of life beyond the reach of politics—about death and the accidents of fate.

The hero of *The Constant Factor* is a young man whose father died climbing a mountain and whose mother is dying, graphically, through much of the movie. Surrounded by timeservers, he has an instinctive, rocklike, unpretentious integrity: bureaucratic punishments can't reach him; only "fate"—the unpredictable chances of the human condition itself—can bring him down. Zanussi's dramatic strategy is exactly the opposite of Gabor's in *Angi Vera*, yet it works almost as well. In *Angi Vera* the enticements of the system take someone young and unspoiled and gradually make her a small cog in its grinding wheels. In *The Constant Factor* a young man favored by the system finds instead that its rewards and compromises mean nothing to him; he would rather be outside it completely, barely subsisting. Both films focus on accidents of character—how individuals react to the little compromises and betrayals that eventually make life sordid, that purchase daily comfort at the cost of moral disintegration.

This is the key to why *The Constant Factor*, *Angi Vera* and *Camera Buff* are so much better than *Confidence* and *The Orchestra Conductor*. The first three films are beautifully organized around the right kind of protagonist, and this helps them keep the political and the personal in perfect balance. The best thing about the hero of *Camera Buff* (Filip, played by Jerzy Stuhr) is that he is so clumsy and ordinary. At the beginning we see him carrying his wife to the hospital to give birth and weeping with boozy sentiment after the baby is born. He works in a factory, loves peace and quiet, and now his wife and child and new apartment seem to have given him everything he could want out of life. But to record it all he has spent two months' pay on an 8-millimeter movie camera, and this powerful little toy eventually drives a wedge a mile wide into his placid, uneventful existence.

Filip's boss asks him to film the company's twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations, and as soon as he takes the camera out of the nursery and into public spaces he is smitten by the movie-making bug. His wife quickly feels the loss of his attention and his boss does his best to censor the footage. His growing problems at home parallel his problems at work; but while groping amateurishly to put together a vision of

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his own, he experiences a new kind of challenge and satisfaction. In a federation of amateur film makers he stumbles on a wider world he has scarcely dreamed of, and he even meets the great director Zanussi, whose film *Camouflage*, with its daring exposure of official cynicism and corruption, is quoted at length in the movie.

It should be clear from this summary that there's something unduly self-conscious about *Camera Buff*, as there is about most movies that deal with movie making. Even in a Polish context, where films have become a special outlet of free expression, it's too reflexive to treat film making so reverently as a privileged vehicle of feeling and meaning. But Kieślowski makes up for this by giving us so many vividly realized details of amateur film making and the institutions of working-class culture in Poland today. Filip's first halting steps with his camera are so credibly awkward that it's hard to believe he can go so far so fast, teaching himself quite a lot of film technique along the way; it's also hard to believe that his wife could be so hostile and unsympathetic to what he obviously needs and wants to do. Nor does the film justify the slightly more sympathetic twist it gives to Filip's boss near the end, when he invokes the world of nature and necessity—as Zanussi does too in *The Constant Factor*—as a rejoinder to Filip's criticism and pessimism. But *Camera Buff* is a far better film than any Filip makes; it goes beyond the Aesopian criticism of society to deal with real subjects—the conflict between work and love, the demands of marriage, the dilemmas of identity and the enigma of death.

These are the same themes Wajda tackles in *The Orchestra Conductor*, but they are stuffed into unconvincing dialogue in the mouths of unconvincing characters. Last year, Wajda, the great director of *Ashes and Diamonds*, *Kanal* and *The Innocent Sorcerers*, gave us two of the real gems of the festival, *Without Anesthesia* and *The Young Girls of Wilko*, both subtle and nuanced dramas with strong characters and delicately detailed scenes. But in *The Orchestra Conductor* he stumbles into a hornet's nest of bad scripting and bad international casting. Music in Wajda's film plays the same role that movies do in *Camera Buff*, as the characters seek self-fulfillment through art. But Wajda has not observed the details of music making with the same close and loving attention, and neither of his two conductors—who seem to belong in different movies—is a very effective character.

Nothing whatever can make us believe in John Gielgud as an internationally famous older conductor returning to Poland after four decades. For most of the movie he simply remains Gielgud, genially doing a visiting turn in a strange foreign vehicle. Not only is Gielgud too famous on his own to inhabit such a part but he has always been more of a voice actor than a body actor. Half the time we hear him in English, which is always a pleasure, but for the other half he is dubbed with a Polish voice in an entirely different register. And his conducting is portrayed as more spiritual than physical—an intimation of conducting rather than its substance. This is set off against the frenetic but pointless energy of a young Polish conductor, played by Andrzej Seweryn, who directs a provincial orchestra.

Between these two characters stands the young conductor's wife, a member of the orchestra, who becomes remarkably wrapped up with the old man at the same time that she is remarkably insensitive to the moods and needs of her own husband, not unlike the more domestic wife in *Camera Buff*. We are supposed to join her at the end in finding out that Gielgud is something of a narcissist and Seweryn is a weakling and a careerist who doesn't love music enough and seeks only his own advancement. These discoveries come entirely out of the blue, and by the time they do we've ceased to care: the pieces simply don't hold together.

Szabó's *Confidence* is a movie set precisely in the wartime terrain that Wajda once explored so powerfully. But this is an eerily quiet corner of the war, a scene not of carnage and heroism but of more subtle terror under Nazi occupation. Behind closed doors, in a setting of almost Beckett-like isolation, two fugitives live as man and wife, the man totally dominated by his fear of exposure and arrest; the woman more casual and human, nostalgic for her real husband and child and quite unable to match up to the role-playing that ultimately corrodes both their identities. Eventually, like two anonymous bodies coupled in a dreamlike sexual fantasy, they sleep together and even fall in love, but the man is too obsessed and fearful to realize what has happened. In the brilliant last scene, which takes place after the "liberation," we see the man running alongside a line of displaced persons, searching for her, calling out her *assumed* name. Elsewhere we see her, tearful, wrapped up in the arms of the husband she no longer loves who is embracing the woman she no longer is.

Unfortunately, the rest of the movie doesn't measure up to the bitter irony of this stunning conclusion. The movie is too pinched and claustral even for its clandestine subject and the characterization of the man keeps hammering away at a single note—his total, abject terror, his lack of "confidence." He browbeats the woman mercilessly—for her own good, he says—and censors every normal human feeling in himself, but the movie never fully explores the creepiness of his behavior. He never seems as threatened as he feels. He turns out to be good in bed, but bed is not good for his head: he thinks he's letting his guard down.

Meanwhile, the woman begins to conceive of trading in the doll's house of her marriage for the delights of multiple orgasm. Despite the dim lighting, this may be a breakthrough for Hungarian movies on the order of Louis Malle's *Les Amants*, but I'm afraid it's already a cliché west of the Danube. The relentless monotony of *Confidence* is a prime example of the fallacy of imitative form: it's a closed-in movie about being closed in. It reminds us how difficult it is to balance the personal and the political, especially when the censor is peering over your shoulder, and it helps us appreciate the fluid narrative of a film like *Camera Buff*, with its variety of scenes and richness of detail.

It would be profoundly patronizing to the East European cinema to acclaim

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these movies indiscriminately or to treat them as political symptoms. They do have their topical side, but on a deeper level they resist being integrated into anyone's cold war. There is something earnest and old-fashioned about these films that is moving but also limiting; they express a personal vision but in time-worn dramatic ways, without the exhilarating personal vocabulary of a Godard or a Kurosawa. For all their misgivings about Communism, they remain tied to a populist conception of art. Susan Sontag once wrote that "the only real shocks in art are those that pertain to form," and the East Europeans have yet to develop an originality of form to match the undoubted seriousness of their themes. □

THEATER

JULIUS NOVICK

American Buffalo
Banjo Dancing

American Buffalo, by David Mamet, is about three stupid low-lifes sitting around in a Chicago junkshop planning a burglary that never comes off. Many people, critics and ordinary theatergoers alike, hate this play. They do not disbelieve it but they find no pleasure in it, and no meaning; they hear nothing in the dialogue but a endless rat-tat-tat of obscenities, like rain on the roof. Yet in 1977 it won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award as the best American play of the season. Now it has been revived by the Long Wharf Theater in New Haven, with Al Pacino as the most violent of its three dumb no-goods. The revival does not altogether do the play justice, but *American Buffalo* still seems to me the best American play of several seasons; nothing written since, by Mamet or anyone else, tells so much American truth so powerfully, so keenly.

Don, the junkshop owner, and Teach, his "friend and associate," are failures by conventional American standards; to raise themselves in their own and other people's estimation, they are constantly dispensing American wisdom in wonderfully unconvincing terms, constantly trying to raise themselves by the frayed bootstraps of their language. This leads them into rich verbal peculiarities that are the main source of comedy in the play and that are rendered fairly well in this production. The key word of the play is "business." Don and Teach are very serious about "business," which Don defines as "people taking *care* of themselves." "Free enterprise" is important too:

Teach: You know what is free enterprise?
Don: No. What?
Teach: The freedom . . .
Don: . . . yeah?
Teach: Of the *Individual* . . .
Don: . . . yeah?
Teach: To Embark on Any Fucking Course that he sees fit.
Don: Uh-huh . . .
Teach: In order to secure his honest chance to make a profit. Am I so out of line on this?
Don: No.
Teach: Does this make me a Commie?
Don: No.
Teach: The country's *founded* on this, Don. You know this. . . . Without this we're just savage shitheads in the wilderness.
Don: Yeah.
Teach: Sitting around some vicious campfire.

Of course their own particular business, their own little free enterprise, happens at the moment to be burglary; that is the cutting edge of Mamet's deadpan satire.

But even in this world where "It's kickass or kissass," as Teach says, Don and Teach still yearn for affection, or at least trust, and Don in particular has a terrible time trying to arbitrate the conflicting claims of business and friendship. The play shows how the rhetoric of business provides a license, exerts a pressure, for personal betrayal. Don has a quasi-paternal relationship with Bobby, an ex-junkie kid who helps him in the store. "You don't have *friends* in this life," Don tells Bobby, then belies what he has just said by patting Bobby kindly on the shoulder (a good touch in this staging) and asking, "You want some breakfast?"

Bobby is going to perform the burglary on Don's instructions, but Teach convinces Don that Bobby isn't up to it, that he, Teach, should "go in" instead, for "business" reasons. When Bobby turns up just when the heist is to be performed, Teach is suspicious. Don is drawn into Teach's paranoid world and the two give Bobby the third degree, until Teach fetches Bobby a clout on the ear that leaves him lying on the floor sobbing with pain. But the poor kid has no malice in him. For Don and Teach, the American buffalo nickel of the play's title is the clue to a valuable coin collection that they are planning to burglarize; innocent Bobby, knowing that Don wants the nickel and forbidden to steal it for him, has gone out and bought him another one.

American Buffalo does not give up its secrets easily. Arvin Brown, the artistic director of Long Wharf and the director of this production, is known for his ability to take a realistic play and make its subtext flower through rich and delicate ensemble acting; that is just what Mamet's play needs and just what is largely missing in this professional, plausible, superficial revival. Clifton James's stolid performance as Don obscures the bond between Don and Bobby, as well as Don's struggle between business and his own feelings as he betrays the kid and his remorse when he realizes what he has done.

Al Pacino's Teach, on the other hand, is anything but stolid. Wandering all over the junkshop, scratching himself, sticking his finger in his ear, standing with his legs apart and his hands fidgeting in his pockets, looking and talking like an overage Dead End kid, the actor gives the audience its money's

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worth of Pacinations, and proves that the good old Actors Studio mannerisms can still be successfully used, at least for comic effect. None of this is at odds with the part; what is missing is the fierce tenseness, the paranoid menace that Robert Duvall brought to the part on Broadway. The best performance of the evening is Thomas Waites's affectionate Bobby: watching him as he hears that he will not be allowed to do the burglary for Don, we are in touch with what the play is about. Generally, this production is slow going through the first act (too long, anyhow, in the writing); in the second act the play's intrinsic tension takes hold as the robbery seems to be imminent and the two businessmen turn on the kid who doesn't know that "it's kickass or kissass."

Stephen Wade is a mild-mannered young man with curly dark hair, a shy smile and a pleasantly casual air. He comes to New York (to the Century Theater) in an odd little one-man show entitled *Banjo Dancing or the 48th Annual Squitters Mountain Song Dance Folklore Convention and Banjo Contest . . . and how I lost*. The show is a bit slender for a theater; it would be better in a cabaret like the Village Gate or the Other End. But Wade is a gifted entertainer. He plays the banjo with terrific virtuosity; he sings, in a high, husky voice; he does "clog-dancing," stomping out rhythms with his heavy lace-up work boots; but most of all he tells tall tales. He is in love with the American folk-imagination and he manages the rare feat of being positive about America without being phony.

He is not a country boy; he is from Chicago and makes no bones about it. He does not perform in jeans or overalls but in a blue three-piece suit, his tie loosened for easy breathing. His material comes from all sorts of sources: from *Tom Sawyer*, from Leo Rosten's *The Joys of Yiddish*, from obscure nineteenth-century writers. After selling ballpoint pens to the audience for a quarter apiece with a nimble-tongued spiel, he says, "Those were the actual words of a pen salesman in New York in 1952."

In his final story, about a dog who outruns railroad trains, Wade's banjo and his stomping feet enable him to *become* a train. In this story he celebrates the speed of the dog, the confidence of the dog's master, the defeat of the railroad man who is determined to prove that his trains can go faster than any dog, the imagination of the man who made up the story and—not least—his own almost impudent talent, which brings the whole thing to life for us. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Kagemusha
It's My Turn
Melvin and Howard

Akira Kurosawa's new film, *Kagemusha*, opens on a conference being held by three men in the throne room of a great palace. They are formally seated and similarly gowned in exquisite robes. The spare, beautifully proportioned room glows in diffused light. The central figure is a sixteenth-century warlord, one of three currently vying for dominion over Japan. Beside him sits his brother and, a little apart, on the floor, is a thief whom the brother has saved from execution because he so closely resembles the lord that he might easily serve him as a double (*Kagemusha* translates as "The Shadow Warrior"). Both men are played by Tatsuya Nakadai, a handsome and commanding actor.

The conference goes on for some time —*Kagemusha* is a ceremoniously paced, three-hour movie—and the scene sets the tone for all that follows in this perhaps most opulent work from a director renowned for the splendor of his films. Looking at the three seated there, I thought "porcelain," and as the movie progressed I fancied myself in a museum collection of Japanese ceramics, with the figures in their hundreds sprung from their cases and swirling around me in a tumultuous masque.

The story itself did not greatly engage me. We all know the legend of the beggar who assumes the identity of the prince and in time acquires also his master's force of character and nobility of mind (in Western versions of the tale, there has usually been some confusion as to cradles), and the film's subplot of the son who is embittered because denied the rights of succession is not new to us. Nor could I become much exercised over the fortunes of the warring parties. In fact, as a romantic melodrama, *Kagemusha* goes on too long. And yet I would have been content to gaze at it for well over the three hours. The enormous cast is composed of warriors, chamberlains, mistresses, guards, pages and messengers—all handsome, elegant and moving with an exotic, slow and formal grace that is music to the eyes.

Kurosawa paints his great battle scene with broad masses of troops rolling obliquely across the landscape, cavalry and foot soldiers plunging into battle with forests of banners flying above them. And between the opposed ranks, individual horsemen dash with messages from leader to leader, triple ensigns fluttering behind their shoulders as the mark of their function. Meanwhile, the warlords and their entourages, whose fates depend on the outcome, sit on stools at vantage points, as though spectators in an arena. It looked like a tapestry of chivalry, splendid in its sweep and fascinating in detail, and I was shocked back to reality when at the end Kurosawa moved his cameras down from the heights to walk among the dead and dying men and beasts.

Kagemusha, for all its color and movement, is a remote, almost impersonal film. It is pure in the sense that its riches are immense but never wasted. I do not really remember it; rather, when I close my eyes I see it all again.

Claudia Weill, whose earlier film was *Girl Friends*, is a director more interested in situations than in stories. Her method is to pick up her heroine at an edgy moment in the woman's life and to carry her through it, without necessarily reaching what we would normally recognize as a conclusion. Weill gets very close to her characters, steadily revealing more about them as the movie unfolds, involving you in their relationships, even, it may be, against your will. It is adult work.

Her current film, *It's My Turn*, pivots on Kate Gunzinger (Jill Clayburgh), a mathematician who teaches at the University of Chicago and lives with an architect named Homer (Charles Grodin) in a loft large enough to give them plenty of physical and emotional elbowroom. Kate is being considered for a job at Columbia University and flies to New York for an interview—also to attend the wedding of her father to a woman she is disposed to resent. At the wedding she meets Ben (Michael Douglas), the bride's son, a former Cleveland outfielder now prematurely retired with a bad shoulder. The Columbia job would be a step up, but also

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VIKING

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a step away from research and toward administration. It would mean leaving Homer, but having met, and slept with, the somewhat masterful Ben, does she want to keep on with the easygoing but self-protectively cool Homer? This double crossroads in her life, combined with a reluctant realization that she has badly misjudged her father's new love, has Kate in a state of compound ambivalence wherein she exposes a great deal about herself.

The film deals with the sort of woman she is, and with the markedly different kinds of men who attract her and are attracted by her. It is an impressive study in the interplay of character, presented by a director and cast who understand the implications of small incidents among people who are testing one another for large commitments. My only quarrel with the performances is that, whereas in life crucial conversations may be held in mumbled fragments, dramatic dialogue must be legible, not to say audible. Thanks to the excessively realistic verbal slurping in *It's My Turn*, I lost a good many of the lines. Clayburgh, Grodin and Douglas are eloquent enough in other ways to convey the sense of what I could not hear, but the effort to do so made me twitchy.

Most viewers, I expect, will admire the film, but how much they enjoy it may depend on how well they like Kate Gunzinger. Weill intends her to be liked, but, to be blatantly subjective, she's not my type. Kate wears her sensitivity on her sleeve. She is one of those women who are forever running their hands through their hair, who smile faint, secret smiles and face up to plain talk with fragile gallantry. Mannerisms of that sort strike me as a kind of bullying—the beleaguered princess act. But in saying so, I acknowledge that Jill Clayburgh's performance got under my skin, and in the end that's more rewarding than the beguiling ways of the no-nonsense charmers.

As an escape from global realities, the movie public these days is lapping up horror films, and it's a wonder that the catastrophic final years in the life of Howard Hughes have not been seized upon for a delicious excursion into creepy madness. Instead, *Melvin and Howard* has been directed by Jonathan Demme as a pleasant comedy, one suitable for family viewing, on the reliably attractive theme of male ineptitude. Hughes, in the person of Jason Robards, appears in an opening episode and again, very briefly, in a dream at the end. On both occasions he sings "Bye, Bye, Blackbird" with much feeling, but otherwise the film belongs to Melvin Dummer, the milkman and garage proprietor who, it will be remembered, came forward after Hughes's death with a tale of having once played good Samaritan to the legendary recluse and with a will in which he is mentioned for a bequest of $156 million. He has never received that fortune, but neither nas he been convicted of forgery; thus he remains in a state of suspense which, if one is to believe the screen story of his life, is a condition to which he is accustomed.

Melvin, as played by Paul Le Mat, is a large and confiding young man with a ready smile and a modest intelligence. He is, you would suppose, someone incapable of inventing an elaborate caper based on a fraudulent legal document. The movie carries him relatively unharmed through a series of clownish mishaps; it acquaints us as well with his two wives, who struggle in vain to divert him from the follies of groundless optimism. Melvin gets on particularly well with his 10-year-old daughter, since they are of approximately the same mental age. The film necessarily ends with him cheerfully resigned to yet another vanished rainbow.

There is nothing much to be said for or against such a film. It is sweet and soothing, engaging and forgettable. If McDonald's served movies along with their hamburgers, this is what you might expect. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Judy Chicago
Philip Guston

The authorship of "The Dinner Party" (Brooklyn Museum, until January 18) is equivocal: it fluctuates between being regarded as a Judy Chicago special production or as the fruits of collaboration. It is in any case a celebration of women in history, as they have been revivified by recent usage. The work is in the form of a huge triangular table with place settings for thirty-nine women. The arrangement is chronological, with a few mythic figures to start; then follow, among others, Sappho, the Empress Theodora, Queen Elizabeth I, Margaret Sanger and Georgia O'Keeffe, the only living woman. Each place is defined by an elaborate plate and embroidered runner, accompanied by a handcrafted but standard goblet and cutlery. The table stands on a field of tiles covered with a calligraphic tide of women's names. The nonhierarchic nature of the selection is shown by a detail: Romaine Brooks is on the floor but Natalie Barney, usually regarded as just one member of her circle, is at table.

Clearly, the work is talismanic to many visitors (the museum is packed) and it meant a great deal to many of the participants to work on it. We can feel this as we study individual settings: the embroidery by many hands is particularly vivid, inventive and epigrammatic. It is my sense, however, that Chicago dominates. It is more like Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* than a collaboration with feedback in both directions. Individual contributions are swallowed by the great plan, and this is Chicago's. Despite workshop photos and lists of co-workers, their secondary position is unmistakable. It is not simply that Chicago's entrepreneurial drive was instrumental in getting it all together; her style is evident in the containing form. The format, a closed triangle, each side of which is forty-eight feet long, is an echo of the minimal sculpture with which she started her career. She was in the "Primary Structures" exhibition at the Jewish Museum in the mid-1960s, the show that first demonstrated the extent of a new style of stark geometrics.

The table encloses a field of white-based, iridescent tiles. (It is awkward to exclude visitors from a two-sided inspection of the table, but clearly traffic problems dictated it.) The rationale, I take it, is to celebrate the radiant center of feminist iconography and to some extent this is achieved, but the table constitutes too hefty a barrier. Thus the floor takes on the remoteness of an ice-rink and the far sides of the table are made to feel very remote. The regularity of the place settings looks mechanical: the module takes over. (I had memories of the spaceship in *2001*.) The variety of the place settings is obscured, their individuality lost in the production-line effect of the great table in perspective.

Either because of a radical desire to push the extreme case or because of an anti-feminist desire to show "The Din-

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ner Party" at its weakest, the deeply modeled vaginal plates (Virginia Woolf and O'Keeffe, for example) have been most reproduced and discussed. In fact the majority of the plates do not have this gross anatomical analogue: they are not less central in their organization, but their surfaces are smoother. This is certainly a case of flat is best.

"The Dinner Party" is all female and the works in "A Tribute to Philip Guston" are all male, but there is a link. Both are motivated by the search for a legible iconography, a powerful incentive in the art of the 1970s. Chicago's installation is legible to start with, owing to her and other artists' and writers' success in investing vaginal imagery with a feminist ideology. The conviction of "The Dinner Party" is based on the fact that it summarizes the most publicized aspect of feminist art: sexual anatomy as the emblem of identity. Compared to this certainty, Guston's imagery is ambiguous behind its obviousness.

The thirty-year sample of his work at New York's David McKee Gallery reminds us of his cyclical development. He began as a figurative painter, lyrical and moody in character, and in 1969 he started painting figures again. In the interim he was an abstract painter associated with Abstract Expressionism: 1952-ca.1957, the pink period, sensuous and delicate; 1957-65, his blue-gray period based on smoky, allusive tones. Guston stood for manual felicity with the brush and small scale in a decade of large-scale gesture and allover monochrome color. His defense of the nuance was canceled suddenly in his later work, explicit in narrative, brute in form. The dialogue with the picture was suddenly expanded by the representation of others: hooded, potbellied Klansmen riding around town, sitting in claustrophobic rooms. They were a drastic exteriorization for a painter whose abstract art was strongly introspective, each brush mark the code sign of an anguished decision.

This first group of representational works forced figure and background differentiation on a style that had previously assumed the equalization of figure and field as an absolute requirement of painting. It was a bold step, but in retrospect we can see that Guston found ways to maintain his subjectivity even among vigilantes in fancy dress. One of the early pieces, for example, shows a painter at his easel, hooded but unmistakably Guston himself. The Klan retreats as subject matter in the later paintings, to be replaced by a schematic landscape of doom with rising floods and still lifes of human refuse.

Guston's iconography was certainly cued initially by the political awareness that is one of the motives for the renewal of specific references in the art of the 1970s. He did not return to abstraction but he developed away from political subjects, such as the Klan, toward an imagery of the human condition in general. Self-references are bound up with an unprepossessing imagery of toppled heads, piles of shoes (a memory of the death camps), blunt hands like uncleaned paintbrushes and stovepipes painted like flayed legs.

To Guston, figuration was not a means of extending his audience but a continuation of his need for self-expression. To Judy Chicago, on the other hand, feminism exists as a resource beyond the self; she has made brilliant use of it for public statement. My criticism of "The Dinner Party" attempts to avoid the all-or-nothing stances of both its supporters and denigrators, but it *is* a flawed piece. However, it is triumphantly public; by comparison the conventional complexity of Guston's later work seems smaller than it need have been. □

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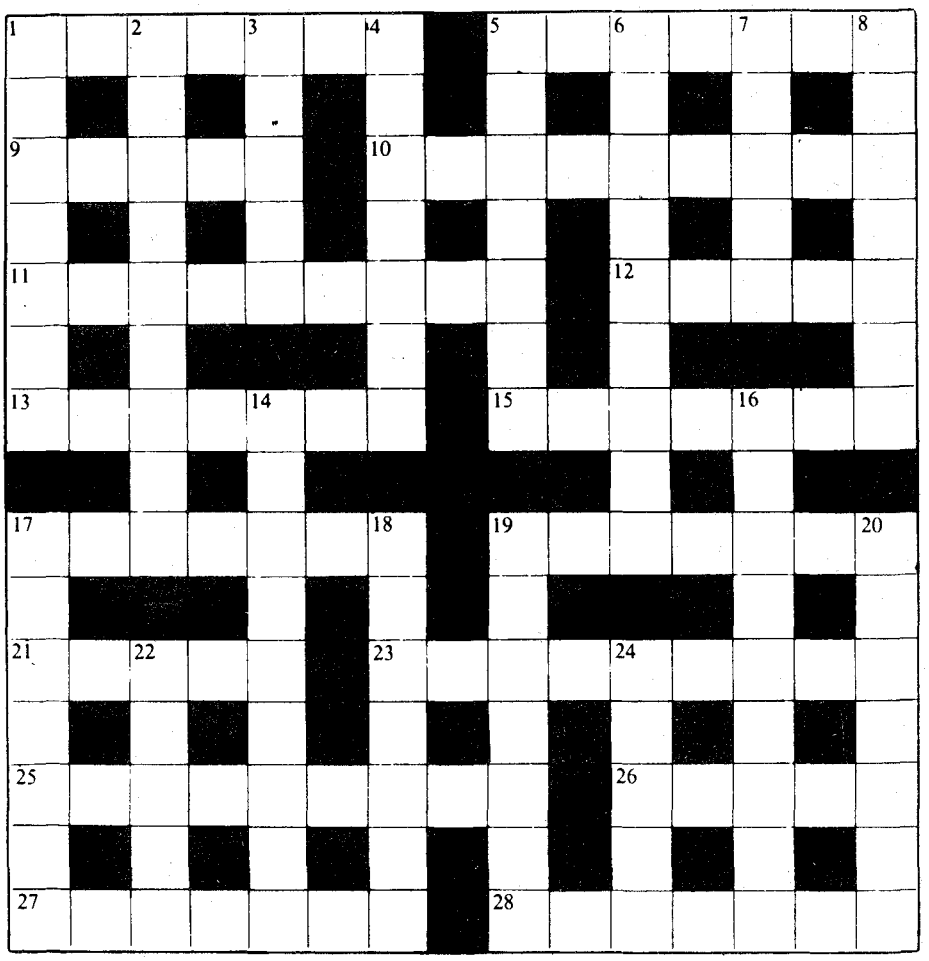

ACROSS

1 and 5 Not a piece written by Hope's companion—just a statement of belief. (7,2,5)
9 One who passed in English literature? (5)
10 The sort of list I gave is showing just a trace of something. (9)
11 Being partisan, one might expect such to be cheaper in sheets, for example. (9)
12 Dance with spirit, to some degree. (5)
13 Deadhead with a sort of powder on the morning grass, possibly. (7)
15 Reduced to an average. (7)
17 Made of paper, at a place to fire from, possibly. (7)
19 and 24 down The witness might run off with what you put your music on. (4,3,5)
21 Freedom, for example. (In defense of something we've had for years!) (5)
23 Evidently not a long autumn—not up to expectations if it does. (4,5)
25 Direct perception in what some students have to arrange for. (9)
26 Part of the real target a would-be bride shoots for. (5)
27 Doesn't miss the absence of work during such? (7)
28 Dopes with crushed seeds at this. (7)

DOWN

1 and 17 down One might get a degree in this, showing how one administered during the purge. (7)
2 The best draftsman, or the best of anything? (3,6)
3 How the trolley went several times in a Germanic language. (5)
4 Wrap up completely, and cut something off after an even sort. (7)
5 State by way of comment, but you may get no credit if you do it at college. (7)
6 Sounds like the sort of chicken to put into a small hiding place for a member of a famous band. (5,4)
7 It's a peculiar expression, like "I do" with "I'm mixed up." (5)
8 Henry with something possibly associated with Scotland. (You might run something up the pole with it.) (7)
14 Not what Will Rogers did while talking—he might have left this to the Indians. (4,5)
16 In part, get it for tattling—it's the way you get even here. (3,3,3)
17 See 1 down
18 Sweet things showing off in fancy neckwear, perhaps. (7)
19 Do those who have them succeed, and make lots of shekels? (7)
20 Amends texts, or gets money in a certain illegal way. (7)
22 React peculiarly to what someone might do with the party. (5)
24 See 19 across

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1842

ACROSS: 1 Empire State; 9 and 25 down Spelling bees; 10 Exodus; 11 Semitic; 12 Burgher; 14 Sequel; 15 Makes out; 17 Coteries; 20 Adored; 22 Earache; 24 Dressed; 26 Medium; 27 Esoteric; 28 Buenos Aires. DOWN: 2 Multitude; 3 Initial; 4 Eggs; 5 and 16 The buck stops here; 6 Thong; 7 Sphere; 8 Bureau; 13 Amass; 18 Onager; 19 Inhuman; 20 A priori; 21 Eyelid; 23 Adieu.

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A Third Interview With The 115-Year-Old Magazine

Your mellow wisdom, gained from your 115 years of weekly existence, has enlightened us in the past. Now I'm wondering if there is some secret of the success of it that you would like to share with us?

Secrets? You want secrets, go file a Freedom of Information Act request. I don't believe in secrets. That's why I proposed the Spy Library.

The Spy Library? What's that?

It's an open-shelf library containing all of our current secrets. It would be open to all spies who can prove a sincere interest in espionage. They could search through the card catalogues and check out any secrets they like.

But I don't understand. Wouldn't that be helping them do their work?

Oh, no. You see, under the present classification system the Government does the spies' work for them. Now our secrets are labeled according to their importance—Top Secret, for the really big stuff, down to Confidential, for small-potatoes secrets. In the Spy Library, the foreign agents would have to figure out for themselves what's important.

I see. Do you have any other ideas like that?

Oh sure. All the time. My Swiss missile bank, for example. It would solve the problem of stationing U.S. missiles in Europe. We'd deposit them in Swiss bank accounts, and the trusty Swiss bankers would hide them in various Alps. As everybody knows, you can trust a Swiss banker to keep a secret. So the Europeans wouldn't have to worry about missiles on their soil and the Soviet Union wouldn't feel threatened.

I thought *The Nation* was a serious magazine of current affairs and the arts. Those ideas sound like *Mad* magazine.

My friend, it's a mad world. Sometimes the most outrageous ideas make more sense than what our Government is selling. Take the MX missile. Only Alfred E. Neuman could have dreamed that one up. Most of the time, though, I just try to make sense out of the world as it comes. And if *you* subscribe to *The Nation*, maybe you can too. Just fill out that handy coupon over on the right.

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